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2007

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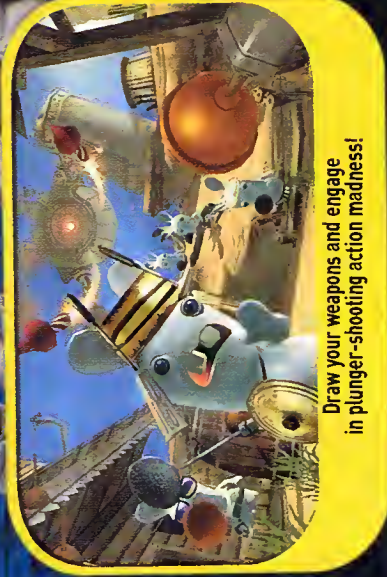


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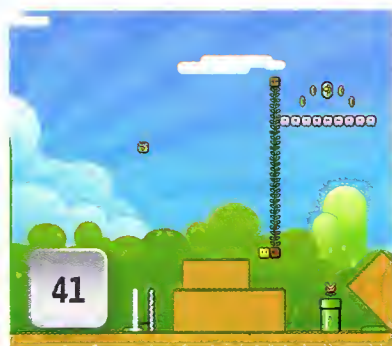
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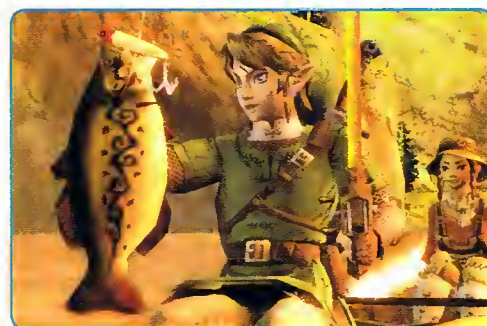
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EDITORIAL

So the Wii is finally here. After years of courting and teasing us with a machine codenamed "Revolution", Nintendo's newest console has arrived and it's clear that the Japanese gaming company has made good on its promise. The Wii is a revolutionary console, as only a few minutes of playing *Wii Sports* will attest.

Of course, Nintendo has taken us into uncharted territory before. Two years ago Nintendo released the DS – a dual-screened handheld with touch screen capabilities. After a slow start where both gamers and game developers alike got their head around the innovative new features and possibilities of the machine, the DS went off. And how. It's the world's best-selling handheld console and home to some fantastically creative games.

Now it's the Wii's turn.

With the promising start to the Wii and the exciting ride that the DS has already been taking us on, there's never been a better time to be a Nintendo gamer.

And that's where we come in. Just like you, we're thrilled with the DS and now the Wii, not to mention the innovative new ways these consoles are allowing us to experience games. Just like you, we're intrigued with what Nintendo has in store for us with both consoles (especially the Wii – there are just so many unanswered questions!). And just like you, we really can't get enough of what Nintendo sends our way.

Consider *Nintendo Gamer* your companion guide to all things Nintendo. We'll keep you posted on all the important and relevant developments in Nintendo gaming. We'll talk about all the great looking games coming our way, and let you know what we think of the newest releases to help you make that choice when you're shopping for your next gaming fix. We'll also celebrate the colourful depth and breadth of Nintendo-related gaming goodness along the way.

And it's a two way conversation. We'd love to hear what you have to say. Are you impressed with the Wii Remote? Can't put your DS down? Want to share your highest bowling score (mine's currently at 221)? Need some help with a game you're stuck in? Have some *Nintendo Gamer* feedback which you just have to share? Let us know at nintendogamer@next.com.au. You might even get published.

Welcome to *Nintendo Gamer*.

It's great to have you on board.

March





COLIN MCRAE: DIRT

So realistic, it has dirt-clumping technology!



CLIVE BARKER'S JERICHO

We get nasty with this haunting shooter



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2007
NEW VISTAS OF GAMING
2007

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We break it down

REFORGING HALO 2:

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Our personal must haves for '07

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HANDS ON PREVIEW

**ALONE IN
THE DARK**

Hands on with the game
set to redefine adventure

REVIEW

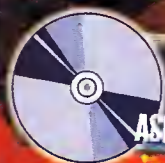
RAINBOW SIX VEGAS

Do tactical shooter fans
hit the jackpot?

IN THE VAULT

HALF LIFE

We look at the origins
of a very special game



NO DVD?

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OUT now

WII LAUNCHES...

● ...and sells out.



Spot March in the crowd and win a prize! The prize of ... WASTED TIME!

December 7 was the day Aussie gamers were finally able to vote with their feet (and wallets) to either vindicate or reject Nintendo's bold strategy of bowing out of the high-definition graphics race and offering new ways to control games with the Wii console. And the response was indeed positive: Wii officially had the biggest launch of a console system in Australia, selling 32,901 Wiis from the Thursday 7th to Sunday 10th launch period. The Wii also broke sales records in the UK, with 100,000 Wiis bought at launch.

The rest of Europe, the US and Japan also had highly successful launches. In each territory the Wii sold out within days, creating much anticipation for those who missed out on the initial shipments and those looking to snap one up during last minute Xmas shopping.

Crowds formed for the midnight launches around the world, where retailers opened early to allow fans

to get the Wii as early as possible on launch day. Some of the more dedicated fans camped out for days prior to the launch in the US and Japan, where the mood was considerably more relaxed and manageable than seen in the lines formed for Sony's Playstation 3, which had a similar launch date in both countries. With limited console numbers and inadequate crowd control measures, tensions were high in the PS3 camp. Maybe playing *Animal Crossing* daily has an effect on anger management after all? Well, except for when you get chastised by Mr Resetti. That can be pretty stressful.

As for the games, *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess* was the Wii's biggest selling launch game in Australia (and the highest selling game overall for the week), with *Red Steel* coming in second and *Rayman Raving Rabbids* at third spot. *Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz*, *Call of Duty 3*, *Need for Speed*

Carbon, *Cars*, *Monster 4x4 World Circuit* and *Spongebob Krusty Krab* round out the rest of the top ten Wii games sold, in that order.

JAPAN'S LAUNCH

400,000 units of the Wii console hardware were made available at its launch in its native Japan on Saturday, December 2nd. In spite of the high availability of Wii consoles, the majority of game stores across Japan were completely sold out of their inventories by mid-morning on launch day. The most popular games were *Wii Sports* (which was not bundled in with the console in Japan), *Hajimete no Wii* (*Wii Play*) and *Zelda: Twilight Princess*, in that order. It's apparent that the console's early adopters are eager to try out the full range of control methods that Wii offers. It also seems clear that Wii is going to be more successful in Japan than the GameCube was, but only time will tell the full story. ■

Wii Remote Man!



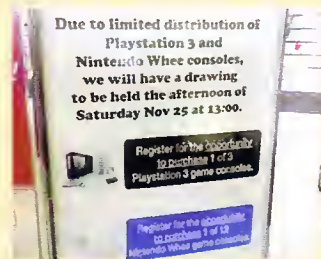
Now before you slag off the efforts of rabid fans, know that it can, in fact, prove quite lucrative. Japanese student Kentaro Watanabe created a Wii Remote costume which he wore to Wii launch celebrations in Japan. "I made this (costume) by myself yesterday," he said the day before launch on December 1. "This is a homage to Nintendo."

Homage indeed. Watanabe became a local celebrity and was rewarded a free Wii for his efforts.



Whee!

What, no exclamation mark? Picture of the month goes to this unnamed retailer who clearly combined the motion-sensing capabilities of the Wii with the creator's love of phonetics at the console's launch in the US. Nintendo Whee! We must say that it's actually growing on us...





MOVE OVER, JAMIE

Here's an example of some of the innovation coming from Japan for the DS. This magnetic adapter for the DS (which slots into the GBA port) allows you to attach the handheld to the fridge and other metallic surfaces, or to be placed on a flat surface to 'prop up' the DS. And why would you bother? Why, to read recipes from the new DS based cook 'books' available in the land of the rising sun. ■

2007: YEAR OF THE DS?

● DS does multimedia

The world's most popular handheld console is set to get some funky new multimedia expansions this year. First up is the Nintendo DS Browser, which is due for release by the end of this month. Using the DS' Wi-Fi capabilities, the Opera developed browser grants internet browsing abilities when connected to a wireless network. The pack contains the Opera browser software on DS card, and a GBA cartridge sized memory expansion unit (which will come in different sizes for the DS and the DS Lite). The browser's been designed specifically for the DS too; a virtual keyboard and handwriting reader will drive the interface in addition to point and tap of the stylus, and the touch screen will also allow users to navigate

through smaller versions of web pages for more comfortable viewing of the enlarged version on the upper screen.

The pack should sell for around the \$50 mark.

Second up is the DS MP3 Player. This simple little GBA slot expansion allows you to listen to MP3-laden SD cards on your DS. There'll be a clean, DS style interface and one with a Mario-styled theme. That's about as sophisticated as it gets though – lacking any direct PC/MAC connection, you'll need to download MP3s to an SD card from your PC first using a card reader before playing it on the DS. SD memory cards and card readers are sold separately, of course. No



release date or pricing has been released yet. And finally, there's the rumour currently doing the rounds that Nintendo will be releasing a new DS model this year with larger screens. Will it come with internet browsing and MP3 playback built-in? Is there any substance to this speculation? We'll just have to wait and see now... ■

MULTIPLAYER M.I.A

● Wii is feeling a bit lonely



Asked about the current lack of online multiplayer capabilities on the Wii, Nintendo of America's president Reggie Fils-Aime recently stated that the first batch of multiplayer enabled games would start hitting the Wii in the first half of 2007, beginning with *Pokémon Battle Revolution*.

Fils-Aime further added that online multiplayer channels were currently in development for the Wii, although no further details about these mysterious projects were revealed.

Meanwhile, the Wii's *WiiConnect24* online capabilities are off to a slow but promising start. Aside from being able to send messages and Miis to other Wiis connected to the internet, Konami's upcoming hide and seek-style action game *Elebits* will allow users to share custom levels and screenshots online with other players. Cool! ■

MII UPGRADE ON ITS WAY?

As much as we here at Nintendo Gamer love the whole Mii aspect of the Wii (and we love it lots), we can't help but be disappointed with the lack of options available. Where are the accessories? The red hair? And the piercings?

Doing the Wii publicity rounds, Nintendo of America's president Reggie Fils-Aime recently suggested that it'd certainly be possible to expand the range of Mii customisation items available with a future downloadable update. So while we haven't got official confirmation of a Mii update,

it's heartening to know that it is possible. Here's hoping Nintendo decides to treat us sooner rather than later. ■



Website of the Month: Mii-Tees

<http://www.mrcloud.com/>
How much are you getting into the Mii aspect of the Wii? Have you created Miis based on friends, family and loved ones yet? Moved onto celebrity Miis? Put that Mii love on a t-shirt for all to see.

Mr Cloud's T-Shirt Emporium will create a custom t-shirt sporting your own Mii creations. You'll have to get your Mii across to them first of course, and this can be done by either sending your Mii to Mr Cloud's Wii via the Mingle option (Mr Cloud's Wii number is provided at the site). Or you could photograph your

on-screen Mii and email it instead. Either way.

Being a custom made t-shirt the price is already a little steep, and being based in the UK the shipping costs are equally humbling. Still, it's a great idea.

Any Aussie Wii-loving entrepreneurs got some silk-screen gear?



WII HAVE A PROBLEM...

It was bound to happen. Fuelled by early Wii promotional videos showing spirited use of the controller and an extra dose of enthusiasm, the Wii remote has proven a destructive little weapon in the hands of a small minority of Wii players.

With the excess force used in playing some games, the Wii Remote is slipping out of the hands of some players and flying into TVs, windows and other household items.

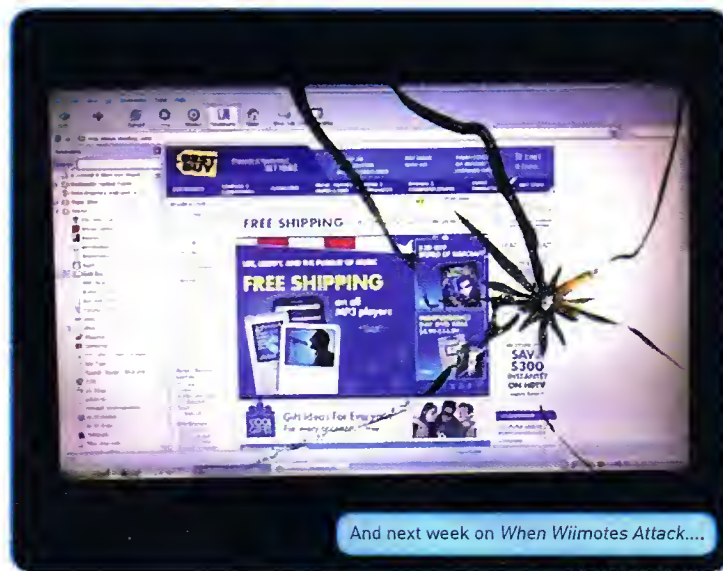
In a bid to stem the tide of property damage and personal injury resulting from over-zealous use of Wii peripherals, Nintendo president Saturo Iwata has confirmed that the company is trying to develop new ways to educate

consumers on the nature of the console and its proper use.

"Some people are getting a lot more excited than we'd expected," Iwata told journalists at the Foreign Correspondents Club. "We need to better communicate to people how to deal with Wii as a new form of entertainment."

Of course, we have a tip for people struggling with the Wii Remote: don't let go of the thing. If there's any potential for the controller to slide out of your hands and cause damage, then YOU'RE USING TOO MUCH FORCE. More subtle motions will suffice. The additional benefit is that you'll look less like a git after toning down your motions too.

And if you still insist on living dangerously, try some of the accessories appearing on shelves to combat this problem. Wii gloves – similar in style to a typical golf glove – and Wii Remote rubber skins are available to offer better grip on the Wii's controllers. ■



And next week on *When Wiimotes Attack...*

EA ANNOUNCES SSX BLUR

• Wooo-hoooo!



After months of playing coy, EA has unveiled the next instalment in its SSX snowboarding series – a Wii exclusive entitled *SSX Blur*.

According to producer Alex Hyder, *SSX Blur* will "take the soul of the franchise – the air, the speed, the tricks, the fun – and Wii-ify it. You're going to see that reflected in the On-the-Ground and In-the-Air controls, the characters, the user interface, and every other aspect of this game."

Now, we don't know what he means by that exactly, but we suspect it means that the game's controls (particularly tricks) will be predominantly based on Wiimote gestures. Maybe. Anyway, it's supposed to be coming out in March, so you can expect a full review (or hands-on preview) next issue. ■

Dr. Kawishama's Kwik Kwiz

How much do YOU know about Nintendo?



1. In which game did Princess Daisy make her debut?
2. True or False: There is an Arwing hidden in *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*.
3. Who composed the original *Super Mario Bros.* theme?
4. In which game will you find a feeble old French boxer named Gabby Jay?
5. Which GameCube game came out first – *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* or *Metroid Prime*?

Answers on p.81

THOSE CRAZY JAPANESE

The Japanese instruction manual for the Wii contains some of the best and most bizarre safety diagrams ever produced. Check out these scans:



Meaning: When using the Nintendo Wii to smash in your friend's face, make sure to hit their weak-spot for massive damage!



Meaning: Nintendo does not condone the use of Nintendo Wii peripherals for purposes of auto-asphyxiation.



Meaning: You are not Godzilla and your Nintendo Wii remote is not a crowded subway train.

WII DVD?

• New Wii model announced for Japan

Did you know that the Wii was originally going to support DVD movie playback? Nintendo cut the functionality from the console's final release however, citing market saturation of DVD players as the reason. Sure, DVD players can be bought for next to nix alongside milk at supermarkets now, but it still would have been a nice addition and its inclusion could have meant one less box near the TV.

Now it appears Nintendo has changed its mind. Japanese gamers will be able to buy a DVD playback enabled version of the Wii when its released sometime mid year. No pricing has been confirmed for the new model but it is believed the DVD version of the Wii will sell alongside the original



at a higher price.

There's been no official announcement of the Wii DVD's release here in Australia, although we'd be surprised if it doesn't turn up on our shores at some stage in the near future. ■

MOST WANTED

• The games you want in convenient list format

You know what this is. It's one of those things where you guys tell us what games you're looking forward to and we make a big list out of it. But of course, since this is our first issue, we don't actually have any readers yet. So! What we've done is made a list of OUR most wanted. And here it is:



1. Super Smash Bros. Brawl (Wii)
2. Metroid Prime 3: Corruption (Wii)
3. WarioWare Smooth Moves (Wii)
4. Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin (DS)
5. Final Fantasy VI (GBA)
6. Chrono Trigger (VC)
7. Pokémon Diamond and Pearl (DS)
8. Super Paper Mario (GCN)
9. Mario Galaxy (Wii)
10. Excite Truck (Wii)



So that's our most wanted – now what about yours? Well, here's what you have to do in three easy steps: 1) figure out which THREE Nintendo games you're hanging out for the most (either on Wii, DS, GC, GBA or VC); 2) write them down; 3) send them to us at the following address:



Most Wanted
Nintendo Gamer
78 Renwick St.
Redfern, NSW 2016



Or email us your most wanted at nintendogamer@next.com.au

Hot & Not

HOT: Making Miis and playing with them in Wii Sports. So far we've made, like, fifty of the little guys. Do you know how great it is to beat Hitler in bowling? Lemme tell you: it's TOTALLY GREAT.



HOT: *Wii Sports Bowling*. This is our Official Office Flavour of the Month. And we're not the only ones that're hooked everyone is into it. Even those non-gaming types from advertising.

HOT: *WiiConnect24*. Always on, easy to use, and full of potential – that's Nintendo's online service in a nutshell. We're especially pleased with how easy it was to set up.

NOT: The lack of Mii-parts currently available. How are we supposed to make TV's Alyson Hannigan when there isn't an option for red hair?



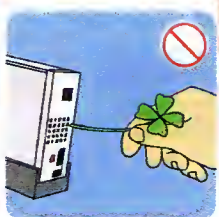
NOT: Wiimote battery life. We've already gone through a full pack of Duracell alkalines. Surely Nintendo could've included a USB charger with the basic bundle?

NOT: Complete lack of online multiplayer. Sure, there aren't many games out that could take advantage of it yet – but still! It'd at least be nice to know how it's going to work.

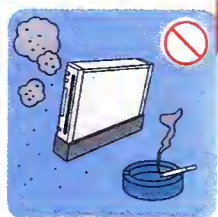
FETCH, PIK. GOOD DOG.

• Nintendo's Trading Cards available now!

Just making deadline is the news that the official *Nintendogs* Trading Card Fun Paks will be available from retailers by the time you read this. Containing six trading cards, one "stand-up" card, a sticker set and a tattoo set, the packs are decent value at \$2.95 each. ■



Meaning: Do not attempt to feed the teprechauns living inside your Nintendo Wii. Doing so may cause them to react violently – and nobody likes a violent teprechaun.



Meaning: Do not let your Nintendo Wii bum cigarettes from you. It says it'll pay you back on Thursday, but trust us – it won't.



Meaning: Even if a Nintendo Wii leads your football team to victory in the finals, you still probably shouldn't pour Gatorade over it.



Meaning: Your Nintendo Wii sensor-bar is not delicious candy. Please refrain from eating it.



INTERVIEW WITH NINTENDO AUSTRALIA

Nintendo Gamer talks with Greg Artherton, Nintendo Australia's Marketing Manager about the Wii and DS.

NG: Congratulations on the success of the Wii launch. Why do you think Wii has been so popular?

GA: I think people are discovering that Wii is offering them something genuinely new and innovative. Whether they are a long term gamer or someone that has played games off and on, Wii provides something for everyone. Wii also provides a gameplay experience like no other. With the motion sensitive technology, you genuinely feel closer to the game than ever before.

Also the Channel system will give Wii owners a reason to use Wii on a daily basis - whether it be to check the news, weather or to surf the web.

NG: How instrumental would you say the DS has been in the Wii's success?

GA: I don't think DS specifically has

been instrumental in the success of Wii. I believe it is the creative and developmental philosophy that is behind both DS and Wii which is the real genius. Basically, to develop product with a sense of providing gamers a completely new and rewarding gameplay experience as the core emphasis is the key factor.

Added to this the view that we need to develop product that will appeal to new, virtually untapped markets and broaden out the potential user base provides bigger and broader consumer markets. You may have heard this referred to as Nintendo's Blue Ocean strategy.

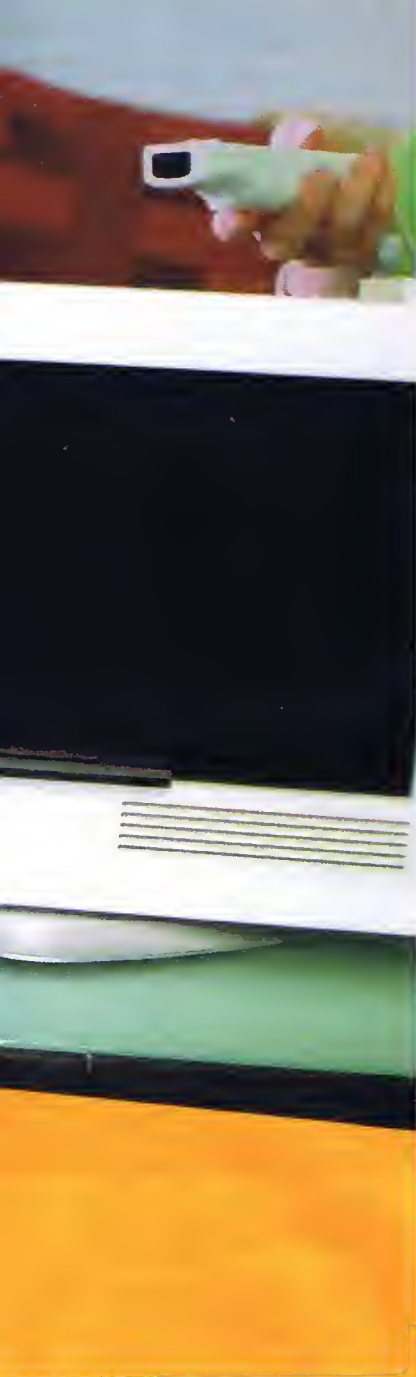
NG: When the DS first appeared, there was much skepticism about a portable with two screens and a stylus control. What would you say to those who are skeptical about Wii and its new control scheme?

GA: Basically what we have been saying all along regarding Wii: playing is believing. For me it is reinforced every time I watch someone new play Wii. Whether they're a long term gamer, a casual gamer or someone who has never really played, everyone has had an enjoyable experience. Once they get the Wii Remote in hand, it is hard to get it away. The simplicity of the controller does not alienate anyone; it provides everyone with a great gaming experience.

NG: What would you say to those who dismiss the Wii when compared to the high definition capabilities of the Xbox 360 and the PS3?

GA: Honestly, I would say that they haven't played Wii yet. I have spoken to many friends and associates who are "tech" minded





who have played Wii and they are all similar in their feedback and that is that technology doesn't necessarily matter. Innovation, creativity, fun and enjoyment are the key ingredients.

NG: People seem to have grasped the Wii Remote, motion-based play aspect of the Wii. What's in store for gamers in 2007 and beyond with the Wii as - first and foremost - a games machine?

GA: Great games. New experiences. Regular surprises!

NG: There's much exciting potential in *WiiConnect24*. What can gamers connected to the 'net expect to see from the Wii and when will we start seeing downloadable content for Wii through *WiiConnect24*?

GA: We do not have much information to share about *WiiConnect24* other than it provides the ability to wake up and receive "surprise" content for your Wii.

This could be in the form of game updates, information, messages, and, more surprises!

NG: Will we see downloadable content for games like *Zelda*?

GA: We have no information on this at the moment.

NG: Beyond Virtual Console, will we see downloadable original mini or bite-size games for the Wii?

GA: This feature has been widely discussed, however we have no confirmed plans at this stage.

NG: Miis are great, especially in the way they appear in games like *Wii Sports* and *Wii Play* as spectators. The only thing is, we'd like to see more customization options with Miis (including things like accessories and clothing). Is this something that's technically possible, and if so, could we see more options in Mii creation in the future?

GA: Yes Miis are great fun, especially with all of the extra things you can do with them - that is, letting them mingle online, taking them to a friends place, etcetera. I know the Miis we have created of ourselves in the office have been the victims of many Wii Boxing bouts. We believe added functionality and customization for Mii's will be available in the future, though there isn't anything further I can share about this right now.

NG: The NES, SNES, N64 has a huge back catalogue of games that's being tapped into via the Virtual Console. Will we see highly desired games which were never originally released locally in Australia? For example, northern hemisphere classics like *Super Mario RPG* and *Chrono Trigger*?

GA: I don't have any information on the availability of these types of games via Virtual Console, though there will be continued updating of the Virtual Console category on a month by month basis.

NG: It's been reported that Japan's getting a DVD version of the Wii sometime in 2007. Will we see this here in Australia?

GA: We do not have any information regarding the availability of the DVD version of the Wii console in Australia.

NG: Having a final retail machine in your hands, are there any surprising or unexpected experiences that you've had with Wii? Anything you're particularly pleased with?

For example, we've been pleasantly surprised by the controls - using the Wii Remote and Nunchuk controller

combination is actually more comfortable for long gaming sessions than standard controllers. (That is Wiimote hand resting on couch armrest pointing at screen; Nunchuk hand in lap.)

GA: It's funny you mention that as I have found exactly the same thing. Instead of being cramped and huddled over your controller, Playing Wii with the Wii Remote and the Nunchuk you can really kick back and relax when playing, then jump into the action when required. The speaker in the Wii Remote really adds to the play - more than I actually thought. Like when you are playing *Zelda*, hearing specific sounds solely out of your controller genuinely adds to the quality of the experience. As does receiving messages from friends while you are playing via the Message Board.

However, the other day when I got home from work and found my wife had dressed my Mii in a pink shirt and included a none too flattering moustache, she set a whole new standard in Mii fashion revenge.

NG: Of course, we can't forget about the DS. Australia's been pretty keen on it, yeah?

GA: DS has been absolutely fantastic for us. We have had such a wonderfully diverse range of software in the last 18 months, it really has been able to show everything the DS can do and reiterate how important innovation and creativity is. Great games such as *Nintendogs*, *Brain Training & Big Brain Academy*, *Animal Crossing*, *New Super Mario Bros*, *Metroid Prime Hunters* have shown the quality of the system design and the value of creativity.

NG: What's in store for the DS in the coming year?

GA: We expect to see some true blockbusters this year, innovative releases, new game styles and even more ways to use DS more regularly, for example with DS Browser due later this month.

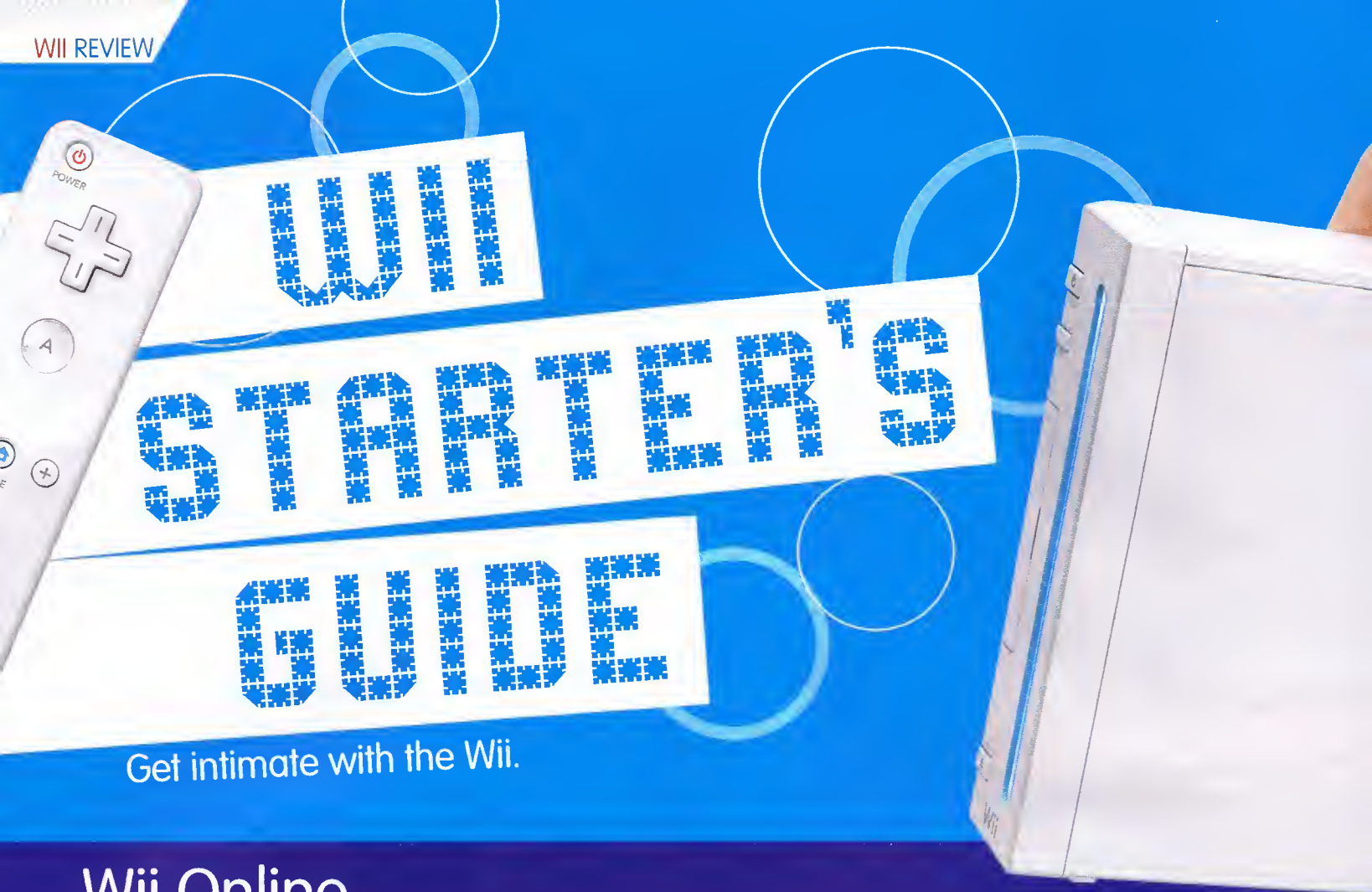
NG: Oh, and it has to be asked. Japan's already playing *Pokémon Diamond & Pearl* on DS. When will Australia get to experience the next *Pokémon* adventure?

GA: Japan has had a huge experience with *Diamond* and *Pearl* and we can't wait to get it here. We don't have any confirmed information, though it is possible for the April - June window of this year.

NG: Nice! Thanks for your time!



The future of Nintendo Gaming - from the top, *Super Mario Galaxy* [Wii], *Metroid Prime 3: Corruption* [DS], *Kirby Squeak Squad* [DS] and *Excite Truck* [Wii]



Get intimate with the Wii.

Wii Online

It doesn't just play games...

Going Online

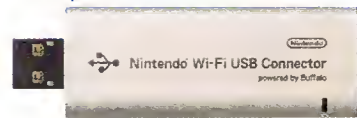
The Wii is Nintendo's first console to support full online connectivity. What this means is that you can play games against (or with) other people using the internet, send other Wiis or PCs text messages and download new games, new services or additional content for existing games (for example extra tracks or cars for racing games). Going online also allows you to download critical system updates for the Wii.

Furthermore, going online gives you access to the *Forecast*, *News*, and *Wii Shop* channels (when available).

First things first: you really do need a broadband internet connection. *WiiConnect24* doesn't support dial-up internet connections, so you'll need to get yourself on a cable, DSL or wireless delivery (like *Unwired* or *iBurst*) broadband plan to make use of the Wii's online capabilities. Once connected, there's a few different options as to how you connect the Wii to the 'net.

What you'll need:

- Broadband internet connection
- Either one of the following three options:
 1. Wireless Router (Wi-Fi)
 2. Wi-Fi USB Adapter
 3. Wii LAN (Local Area Network) Adapter + Ethernet cable



1. If you've already got an 802.11b wireless router/network setup at home, connecting the Wii couldn't be easier thanks to its inbuilt wireless receiver. Simply run the *WiiConnect24* wizard from the Wii's setup menu, select your router as it appears, enter the SSID key and let the Wii do the rest. Within moments you're connected.
2. Nintendo's DS Wi-Fi adapter is the second option. If your home lacks a wireless network, Nintendo's Wi-Fi dongle is the

next most affordable solution. Simply plug the dongle into a spare USB slot on a computer already connected to the internet and run the setup program on the PC to create a wireless network. From there, follow the same steps connecting to the Wii as described above to take the Wii online.

Be aware, however, that the USB Wi-Fi adapter will only work with the DS and Wii, not other Wi-Fi devices (like a laptop).

3. And lastly, if you prefer the stability and performance of a hard-wired setup (or you just can't run the Wii wirelessly), the Wii LAN Adapter is your only other choice. Connecting it to one of the Wii's USB slots, the adapter gives you a standard Ethernet port so the Wii can be plugged via Cat 5 cable into the network. You'll need to patient if you choose this method though – Nintendo hasn't yet launched the adapter but is expecting to do so by March of this year.

GOING WI-FI

Setting up a wireless network using either a wireless router or Nintendo's USB Wi-Fi adapter doesn't only benefit the Wii. Nintendo's other console, the portable DS, can also use the wireless network for online services like multiplayer and message exchange.



Missing in Action

At the launch of the Wii, the channel menu was lacking in two options: the news and forecast channel. The weather forecast channel went live in late December, while the news channel is set for release January 27th. It's not long now!



Play it again, Sam

Wii's Virtual Console allows you to play older generation games on your Wii. Once purchased and downloaded via the *Wii Shop*, each game gets its own channel on the main Wii menu for play. For more information on the Virtual Console, go to page 66.

Online Multiplayer

The other feature conspicuously absent from the Wii is online multiplayer. While game developers have provided some great same-room multiplayer experiences (like *Wii Sports* and *Super Monkey Ball Banana Blitz*), none of the launch titles or any of the upcoming releases (in the short term, at least) will support the ability to play against or with other people using the internet. Disappointing? Absolutely, however

there's respite on the way for those wanting an online fix. *Pokémon Battle Revolution* will be the first game for the Wii to support online multiplayer, with more games to follow suit. No firm release date has been set for *Pokémon Battle Revolution*, however it's expected to hit Aussie shores in the first half of 2007.

WII SHOP

This is where new Virtual Console games, software (like the Opera browser) and other downloadable content can be found. New Virtual Console games are released every Friday at 10:00am EST (12:00pm in New Zealand), while other downloads will be available as required. Check back here often to see what new goodies have been released.

WII MAIL & MII MINGLING

You can send messages (email) to other Wiis and computers connected to the internet. To do so, you'll need to register the other user via their unique Wii number

(in the case of the Wii) or an email address (in the case of a PC or mobile phone). Once registered you're free to send messages and photos to that user. Note that you'll only be able to send photos from a PC or mobile phone to a Wii, and not vice versa. Wii to Wii, however, is fine.

Once you've registered a friend's Wii, don't forget to ask them to set their Miis to "mingle" (accessible from the Mii channel). This allows their Miis to travel to your Wii over the internet to join your Mii collection – and be included in Mii compatible games!

SURF THE WEB

If all has gone to Nintendo's plan, you should now be able to download the Opera browser from the Wii Shop channel for free (and if not, it should be going live VERY soon). Installing this adds internet browsing capabilities to the Wii, which while maybe not exactly a killer app, is certainly a cool freebie nonetheless. Be quick though: there's talk that Opera will only be free for a limited time (rumours

Top five reasons to take the Wii online

1. **Online multiplayer...** Okay, so it's not ready yet. But it is coming!
2. **Virtual Console...** Retro classics get a new home.
3. **Extra goodies...** Downloadable content (especially when free and unexpected!) makes us cheer.
4. **Email/Messaging...** We like getting personal messages on our console.
5. **Web browsing, news and weather forecasts...** It's like the intertron on your Wii!



suggest this to be a few months), after which you'll be charged an undisclosed amount for the download.

WIICONNECT24

WiiConnect24 is the name of Nintendo's online service, but there's more to it than just online web browsing and multiplayer gaming. The '24' part of the name is all about the fact that the Wii is continuously connected to the internet – 24 hours a day – whether the Wii is on or off. The idea is that the Wii can accept new content (like emails and extra game content) even while you sleep!

Nintendo

Wii

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DS - the Ultimate Accessory

Here's another feature to file under the "cool but not quite ready" category. The Nintendo DS can connect to the Wii wirelessly (much like the GBA could be connected to the Nintendo GameCube, except via cable, of course) allowing for all manner of cool gameplay enhancements. The first game to make use of this feature will be *Pokémon Battle Revolution*; the DS can replace the Wii Remote as the game's controller, and will use the dual screens to display information that isn't displayed on the TV screen.

Wii Multimedia

Who needs DVD?

GameCube Mark II



Don't forget – those ports under the flap at the top of the Wii (when in a vertical position) aren't for ventilation. No, the Wii is fully compatible with the Wii's predecessor – the GameCube – meaning the Wii gives instant access to a back catalogue library of hundreds of GameCube games.

To play GameCube games, you'll need a GC controller and a GC Memory Card (to save the games on; SD cards just won't do here unfortunately). The smaller GameCube discs are loaded into the main drive bay and selected to play from the Disc Channel.

The good news is that there's still plenty of quality GameCube software available from retailers, so if you've never played GameCube games there's plenty to catch up on. We'll even help you sort out the wheat from the chaff; check back with a future issue of Nintendo Gamer for a GameCube buyers guide.

VIDEO AND MUSIC

While the Wii will play MP3s stored on an SD card in the Photo Channel, it lacks a dedicated media player for the task. We wouldn't be surprised if Nintendo adds this to the Wii via a downloadable update down the track, however nothing's been announced so far.

Aside from general music MP3s, some games support custom soundtracks via MP3s during play. Simply load the SD card filled with your MP3s into the Wii and select it in the in-game menu. The first game to allow this is *Excite Truck*, which is due in February.

SD MEMORY CARDS

The Wii makes use of SD memory cards, opening up the Wii's non-gaming elements.

Here's what an SD card allows you to do with the Wii:

- * View and edit photos and movies in the *Photo Channel*.
- * Listen to MP3 music files in *Photo Channel* and some games (where supported).
- * Store (and transfer) Wii save game files.
- * Save additional downloaded content, like Virtual Console games.

With only 512MB of internal storage, the Wii isn't designed to store a whole lot of multimedia information. Thankfully, expanding this is as simple as dropping in an SD memory card in the Wii's SD slot, giving you anything from 16MB to 4GB of additional storage. Prices start from around \$20.00 for 256MB card, up to \$170.00 for the gargantuan 4GB card. The sweet spot seems to be the 2GB

card, which you can around the \$100.00 mark.

But before you leap out and fork over some cash for the honour, it's worth considering whether you need an SD card, and if you do, what exactly you need it for.

Unless you plan to play large home movies, hour long photo slide shows on your Wii or your entire MP3 collection on your Wii, you don't really need a large SD card. The only area you may run into trouble down the track (and we're talking a while yet) is filling your Wii's internal memory with Virtual Console games. The solution? Delete older games as you need; the Wii keeps a track of which games you've bought and once you've paid for a game, you can download the same game repeatedly.

WII REMOTE CONNECTION WOES

Having trouble getting extra controllers to connect with the Wii for some games? Sick of having to synchronise an extra controller every time you start a multiplayer game of *Wii Sports*? The solution is simple: ditch the "One Time Mode" synchronisation method of connecting and go with "Standard Mode" synchronisation instead. First, press the red 'sync' button found under the Wii remote's battery cover, then press the Wii's red 'sync.' button found next to the SD slot (under the front flap). This way, all you need to do is hit the A button on the Remote to have the Wii hooked up and ready to go – which is perfect for hassle-free multiplayer sessions.

GOT BATTERIES?

One of the less publicised and liked aspects of the Wii remote is that it chews through batteries like there's no tomorrow. While the Remote's official user's guide states clearly that nothing else but disposable alkaline batteries are to be used (which would require some serious household budgeting for), Nintendo's official US website states that Nickel Metal Hydride (Ni-MH) batteries – a common form of rechargeable battery – are fine.

Charger and sets of four Ni-MH batteries start from around \$50, with extra batteries going for roughly a twenty for a four pack, and are available from most good electrical retailers.

Oh, and if you're taking your remote to a friend's place for some multiplayer gaming, here's some useful advice: take the batteries out during transit. This prevents draining as the remote tries to look for the Wii every time you bump its buttons.

Extra controllers

Extra Wii Remotes sell for \$69.95, with the companion Nunchuk sold separately for \$29.95. The Classic Controller (used for Virtual Console games) retails for \$29.95.





Surround Sound What you'll need:

- 1 x 5.1 speaker system (one center speaker, two front and two rear)
- 1 x Dolby Pro Logic II compatible amplifier
- Note:** some surround speaker sets come with an amplifier. Check whether this supports DPL II.

Home Theatre setup

Play the Wii in style

Just because Nintendo has bowed out of the high octane graphics race against Sony and Microsoft, it doesn't mean that the Wii has to be relegated to the 34cm hand-me-down TV in the back room. No, there's enough horsepower in the Wii to take advantage of typical modern high-definition television sets and surround systems, and have its pride of place amongst the rest of your hi-fi gear.

VIDEO

First thing's first: the Wii is not a High Definition games machine. What this means is that it doesn't output its video signal at a high enough resolution to qualify for the high definition tag, which currently sits at 720p (1280 x 720p) and goes as high as 1080p (1920 x 1080p).

Instead, the Wii supports the Enhanced Definition TV (EDTV) resolution of 480p (Progressive) – which while not hi-def, is markedly better than standard definition. The image produced in 480p is sharper and more vibrant than standard definition visuals. It also gets rid of the image ghosting and bleeding found with Wii's using composite cables in standard definition display.

WII IN 480P

Once you've hooked up the Wii to the TV via the component cable adapter, don't forget to change the Wii's video settings (from the main menu, select Wii -> Wii Settings -> Screen -> TV Type) to take advantage of 480p.

There is a catch, however. The only way to use the Wii's EDTV capabilities is to buy a component cable adapter for the Wii, which sells for about \$49.95 (the composite cable included with the Wii supports only standard definition display). If your TV does support 480p or higher, we strongly recommend getting the adapter as games will look better on your telly for it.

That said, the Wii still looks great on standard definition TVs.

AUDIO

Just as the Wii doesn't do high-definition visuals, it falls a little short in the digital audio department as well. While the Wii does do surround sound, it does so by using Dolby Pro Logic II. DPLII is an analogue matrix decoder and a bit of a cheat when compared to the far superior, true digital surround systems available. It's a surround sound solution without actually being true surround sound; in plain English, analogue matrix decoders only simulate surround sound. The end result, however, is nonetheless surround sound and this is a very good thing.

Of course, to use surround sound you'll need some extra gear. You'll need 5.1 speakers, and these will need to be plugged into a decoder (usually an amplifier) which supports Dolby Pro Logic II. The good news is that you'll be hard pressed to find a decoder these days that doesn't support the DPL II standard.

And why would you want surround sound? Easy. Games, just like movies, have been designed

to take advantage of surround sound speaker systems, and the effects are wonderful. Once you go surround sound, it's very hard to go back to ordinary two speaker sound presentation.

NEED SURROUND?

If you don't already have a home theatre-style surround speaker setup at home, don't fret. The price of entry has dropped substantially over recent years from the thousands of dollars you used to have to spend for the privilege. Surround sound speaker systems start as low as \$200!

We here at Nintendo Gamer use and recommend Logitech's range of THX certified surround sound speaker systems. Perfect for most small to medium sized spaces, these come with everything you need to get your Wii up and running for stunning surround sound – including support for Dolby Pro Logic II.

While there are more powerful models available, the Logitech Z-5400 Digital 5.1 Speaker System at \$499.95 is a base model and handles the surround sound task more than admirably enough.

Widescreen (16:9) vs standard (4:3) Display

The name says it all, really. With the extra "width" that a widescreen image has over a standard 'boxy' definition display, you get more of a game's periphery (both to the left and right of the main image) with a widescreen TV. While it's a nice touch, games are still largely developed with the standard 4:3 aspect ratio in mind. Which means that if you've got a normal 4:3

Enhanced Definition Wii

What you'll need:

To get the best possible visual experience out of your Wii, you'll need the following:

- ➔ A television supporting 480p (progressive) or higher, widescreen (14:9) display, and component cable inputs.
- ➔ Component cable adapter. This is available via Nintendo mail order (03 9730 9822) or from most good retailers for \$49.95.

Note: You can tell if your TV supports 480p if it has a set of dedicated red, green and blue video jacks on it.



TV, never fear: you're not missing out on anything important. To turn on the Wii's widescreen format if you do have a TV which supports the standard, simply go to the Wii setup menu and select the 'screen' option. Note, however, that you may also need to turn on widescreen in specific games using the in-game options menu.



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NG01



HEY, DO YOU WANT TO WIN THINGS?

Because if you want to win these things, then maybe we can help you out. See, thanks to the friendly snail-eating French persons at Ubisoft Australia, we have some neat awesome *Rayman Raving Rabbids* prizepacks to give away. One prizepack – the MAJOR ONE – consists of the following goodies:

1 x Wii (\$399.95)

1 x Rayman Raving Rabbids game (\$99.95)

1 x Raving Rabbid Plush Toy (\$29.95)

And then we've got FIVE RUNNERS-UP prizepacks, and they contain:

1 x Rayman Raving Rabbids (\$99.95)

1 x Raving Rabbid Plush Toy (\$29.95)

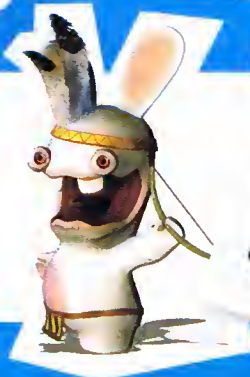
The total combined value for these prizepacks is \$1179.35 – which is a fair bit of money, when you think about it.

Now! The important part – how to win. We've hidden TEN RABBIDS throughout the mag (NOTE: the ones in the *Rayman Raving Rabbids* review on pages 50 & 51 and on this page don't count!). Your job is to find them, write down their locations on the back of an envelope, and send that envelope to us. Oh! Wait a sec: do you even know what a Rabbid looks like? They're the crazy rabbit things in this Rayman game we're talking about. Look, here's some pictures:



Okay, there you go. So now you know what you're supposed to find – go and find it! Ten times over. And here's where you send your entry once you're done:

RAVING RAYMAN COMP
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Vitamin Wii



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BUYER'S GUIDE

NINTENDO GAMER'S PICK OF THIS YEAR'S HOTTEST WII AND DS TITLES



So the Wii launch has come and gone. *Zelda's* Hyrule has been saved. You've taken out more *Yakuza* in *Red Steel* than you can care to remember. And *Wii Sports*? *Wii Sports* you've done to death. So what's next? Plenty. What we've seen of the Wii so far is nothing: a mere entrée to the smorgasboard of top-quality titles to come. 2007 will see Wii versions of almost every major Nintendo franchise, including *Mario*, *Metroid*, and *Smash Bros.* But that's not all. Thanks to its record-breaking launch, third-party support for the Wii continues to grow at an exponential rate – and the result is a bumper crop of games from some of the industry's biggest players,

such as Capcom, Konami, Ubisoft, Square-Enix, EA, and Activision. Oh yes, this indeed a good year to own a Wii.

And the DS? The DS is a freaking powerhouse right now. In addition to an ever-expanding library of quality Nintendo games, the DS has also managed to attract an incredible array of famous and respected third-party franchises. We're talking about some of the most beloved names in gaming here: *Final Fantasy*, *Dragon Quest*, *Castlevania* – we're talking about the sort of games you buy a console for.

And that's actually a pretty good summary of what this feature's all about. So! Let's get on with it!



SUPER SMASH BROS. BRAWL



Super Smash Bros. Brawl is the only reason you need to buy a Wii. Obviously there are plenty of other good reasons as well – but *SSBB* is the definitive one. Which is kind of funny because it's one of the few Wii games we know about that doesn't take advantage of the motion-sensitive controller. It's like a Wii game

that ... isn't really a Wii game. It's a paradox is what it is. And since thinking about paradoxes hurts me in the brain, let's change subject and instead talk about how awesome it's going to be to see Solid Snake beat up a Pokémon.

The whole idea of a *Smash Bros.* game (in case you've never played one before) is that all these famous Nintendo characters get together and beat the living crap out of each other – sort of like a cross between *Street Fighter* and *Super Mario Kart*. The great thing about this particular *Smash Bros.*, or perhaps one of the MANY great things about it, is that the roster of playable characters has expanded considerably. As well as the usual Marios, Links, and Kirbys, we've also got Wario (who has some sort of bizarre atomic-fart attack), Zero-

Suit Samus (i.e. Samus in skin-tight lycra), Pit (from *Kid Icarus*), Meta-Knight (bad-guy from *Kirby*), and – yes! – Solid Snake from the *Metal Gear Solid* series. Of course, Snake isn't a Nintendo character per se, but whatever. He's Solid Snake. He can do whatever he wants. What? Are you going to argue with him? He'll slit your damn throat, man.

Actually, maybe he won't slit your throat at all. Judging from the early gameplay videos released by Nintendo, Snake's fighting style will consist largely of Judo-style CQC (Close Quarters Combat) moves combined with the occasional use of guns and bombs a la old-school Samus. For fans of the last game, think of him as kind of what Shiek would be like if she were packing heat. Speaking of combat, it seems

that Nintendo is trying to slow down the pace a bit for *SSBM*, making it more like the original *Smash Bros.* than its sequel. Presumably this has something to do with the new focus on air-combo attacks, some of which are demonstrated by the angel-winged Pit in the most recent demo.

Oh, and you know what else *SSBB* is going to have? Online multiplayer. We don't have any specific details yet – we just know it's going to be in there because series creator Masahiro Sakurai has confirmed it. So there you go. If that (along with everything else) isn't enough to convince you that this will be one of the best games ever made, then I honestly don't know what else I can say.

Other than "get a new hobby", I mean.



EXCITE TRUCK

INFO

GENRE: Racing
PLAYERS: 2
DEVELOPER: Monster Games

Already released in the US where it was a Wii launch-title, *Excite Truck* is the sort of racing game that will probably make you yell "hooooly craaaaaaaap!" at least once while playing it. The basic idea is breakneck racing in monster-trucks with lots of jumps – like *Burnout* meets *Monster Truck Madness* with a little bit of *Excitebike* thrown in for nostalgia's sake. Don't worry if you've never played any of those games and so

have little to no idea what I'm talking about. All you need to know is this: *Excite Truck* = FUN.

What makes it so much fun that we had to break out the caps-lock key? Well, for one thing, it has motion-sensitive controls. What you do is hold the Wiimote horizontally (like an ordinary joypad) and tilt it to side-to-side to steer while using the face buttons to accelerate and so on. It's an intuitive setup that does much to enhance *Excite Truck's* already pronounced sense of speed. The only downside we noticed is that it's sometimes a little too twitchy for its own good. But then maybe that's just us. We suck at racing games.

Another neat thing about *Excite Truck* is the way you can deform terrain by picking up special markers while you race. You could be racing along a flat straight when suddenly you drive over an icon that turns the track in front of you into a giant hill – instantaneously creating a new jump and probably a new shortcut as well.

So! Do you see what we mean about this whole FUN thing now? Expect the full review of *Excite Truck* next issue ... IF YOU DARE.

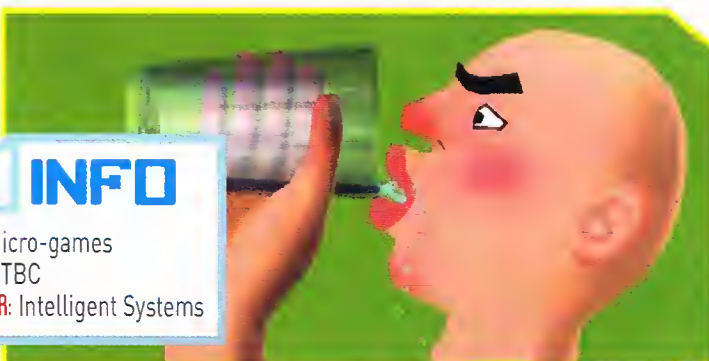
INFO

GENRE: Fighting
PLAYERS: 4 (Maybe more!)
DEVELOPER: Nintendo



INFO

GENRE: Micro-games
PLAYERS: TBC
DEVELOPER: Intelligent Systems



WARIOWARE: SMOOTH MOVES

Having had a brief-but-satisfying hands-on with *Smooth Moves*, we're happy to report that it's shaping up to be the best WarioWare released since the original GBA version. Thanks to the inclusion of on-screen prompts that demonstrate how to hold the Wiimote before each micro-game, it's wonderfully easy to get the hang of – even for people who

aren't familiar with the concept. And since this is a Wii game we're talking about, it's not surprising that most micro-games seem to involve an embarrassing amount of exaggerated gesticulation. Jumping up and down, squats, arm-waving, hula-hooping ... the potential for hilarious accidents is astronomical. Especially when playing with an unco like Dan.



THE SIMS

Genre: Simulation
Players: TBA (Probably 1)
Developer: EA

That the ever-ubiquitous *Sims* franchise is heading to Wii shouldn't surprise – the fact that it looks so different should makes this family-friendly people simulator stand out a mile.



AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER

Genre: Action RPG
Players: TBA
Developer: Studio Oz/THQ
Locally-bred by the folks up at THQ Brisbane, this action adventure is based on Nickelodeon's hugely popular cartoon series, *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. Expect a big focus on martial arts in combat.



FIRE EMBLEM

Genre: Fantasy Strategy
Players: TBA
Developer: Intelligent Systems
This long-running series fantasy-strategy series (we're talking dragons, magic users, and people who wear shorts like Conan the barbarian) is getting the Wii treatment, although without motion-based controls.



COOKING MAMA: COOK OFF

Genre: Cooking sim
Players: 1
Developer: Taito
One of the DS' more innovative titles, *Cooking Mama* comes to Wii with updated visuals, more recipes, and more ways to put food together. And more natural, gesture-based controls using the Wii Remote this time!



INFO

GENRE: Life-sim
PLAYERS: TBC
DEVELOPER: Nintendo EAD

INFO

GENRE: Platform
PLAYERS: 1
DEVELOPER: Nintendo EAD

ANIMAL CROSSING

We'll be honest – we don't actually know that much about *Animal Crossing* on Wii. Other than confirming that it exists, Nintendo has been typically reluctant to release any hard details about the game at all. The only info we have comes from comments made by game designer Katsuya Eguchi, who has said in an interview that "someone could send a letter from their cellphone or from an email address on a PC to the Wii, and then the player living in the town in *Animal Crossing* could receive that letter." He's also commented that user designed furniture is a "great idea" and dropped hints as to how the game will link with the Wii's Message Board service. And that's it. That's everything we – or anybody else outside of Nintendo – knows about AC Wii. Oh well. We'll be happy so long as Mr Resetti's in there. Everything else is just sort of a nice bonus.

SUPER MARIO GALAXY

And so Mario's tireless quest to conquer all that exists continues unabated. From *Super Mario Land*, to *Super Mario World*, and now an entire *Super Mario Galaxy*. The next logical step is *Super Mario Universe*, followed soon after by *Super Mario Dimension*. And then the unthinkable but inevitable final step: SUPER MARIO GOD. The Lord of all Existence will be a fat plumber with a bad mustache. I don't know how that differs from what we currently have, but I can only assume it's a change for the worse.

But enough japery – let's talk about the game. Despite being on the Wii, *SMG* seems to play very

much like its 3D predecessors, *Mario 64* and *Mario Sunshine*. The gimmick with this one is that it takes place in a galaxy of planetoids that Mario can jump between at will. Controls are split between the Wiimote and nunchuck, with the buttons on the former assigned to jumping and basic interaction, and the stick on the latter used for movement. The Wiimote is also used to control Mario's star companion: a Navi-like fairy that is used like a mouse-cursor to interact with various parts of the gameworld. In the first world, for example, you have to make a series of bells ring by waggling the star over them. It's a neat little mechanic



that provides the basis for some clever boss-fights later on.

Speaking of boss fights, the demo we played had three different bosses in it. Which one you fought depended on how you navigated the planetoids, suggesting that *SMG* may be the sort of game you can play through in a multitude of different ways. Nice. Also, it looks great. Even if *isn't* all HD-ified.



INFO

GENRE: FPS
PLAYERS: 1
DEVELOPER: Retro Studios

METROID PRIME 3 CORRUPTION

According to Retro Studios, one of the main aims of *Metroid Prime 3: Corruption* is to explain the properties and origins of Phazon: the mysterious radioactive mutagen introduced in the original *Metroid Prime*. It turns out that Samus has been infected by this horrible gunk via her evil twin – and now she's being corrupted by its influence. Hence the sub-title "Corruption".

So! That sounds like quite the twist! Especially intriguing is how

the Phazon infection translates directly into gameplay in the form of a "Hyper-mode" – a kind of Phazon-rage in which Samus can perform a variety of new attacks, including a weird tentacle-thrashing morphball thing that ... well, you'd have to see it to really understand how it works. You'll also be interested to know that *Corruption* will feature other bounty-hunters a la Hunters on the DS. And they're not all out to kill you this time! Hooray!

If the brief preview we played is anything to go by, then *Corruption* seems to be shaping up pretty well. The motion-sensitive controls (you use the Wiimote to aim) are a bit cumbersome, but the Nintendo dudes assure us that this is just a testing thing that'll be fixed come the game's release later this year. And no: we don't know when it's coming out. All we know is that it's "after March". So ... maybe April? It's anybody's guess at the moment.

INFO

GENRE: Pokémon Action
PLAYERS: TBC (maybe 1-4)
DEVELOPER: Pokémon Co.

POKEMON BATTLE REVOLUTION

While *Pokémon Battle Revolution* will be in stores in Japan by the time you read this, there's still a heck of a lot we don't know about this title. Like, will it include a full singleplayer *Pokémon* story for fans to play through as was featured in its predecessor, *Pokémon Coliseum* on GameCube? We don't know, but as soon as we find out we will, of course, let you know.

What we DO know, however, is that as the title suggests, *Battle Revolution* is all about pokémon fisticuffs. *Battle Revolution* will allow you to import pokémon from

your copy of *Pokémon Diamond* or *Pearl* on DS to battle it out against other Pokémons in specific combat arenas. The obvious drawback is seeing your portable pokémon enlarged in gorgeous 3D on a big screen, and *Battle Revolution* won't disappoint here. It looks good.

But the revolution hinted at in the title surely has to be the DS wireless connectivity featured. The game can be controlled entirely via the DS, with all manner of stats and options kept hidden from your opponents on your own personal DS' screen(s).

MINI PREVIEW

MARIO STRIKERS CHARGED

Genre: Sports
Players: TBC
Developer: Nintendo
A sequel to the rambunctious *Mario Smash Football* on GameCube, this version of "Mario Does Football" is looking even more physical than the original.

DRAGON QUEST SWORDS

Genre: Sword action
Players: TBC
Developer: Square Enix
Subtitled *The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors*, *Dragon Quest Swords* is a spin-off game using a similar visual style to the recent (and brilliant) *Dragon Quest: Journey of the Cursed King* on PS2.

NECRO-NESIA

Genre: Survival Horror
Players: TBC
Developer: Spike
We love survival-horror: could we be in luck with *Necro-Nesia*? The foggy and dark atmosphere says yes; and the giant insect enemies you fight suggest we could be in store for some serious cheese. Whee! Cheese!

MARIO PARTY 8

Genre: Action
Players: Multi
Developer: Nintendo
This is another one of the titles we know little about, except of course that it's definitely coming. Oh, and we know we have really high hopes for this one. The Wii is a perfect platform for party games.



INFO

GENRE: Flying Hedgehog
PLAYERS: TBC
DEVELOPER: Sonic Team/SEGA

SONIC AND THE SECRET RINGS

Previously known by the much cooler name of *Sonic Wildfire*, *Sonic and the Secret Rings* is the first in what will probably be a very long line of Wii-exclusive games for the world's most famous anthropomorphic hedgehog. And yes, there ARE other anthropomorphic hedgehogs out there. But because *Nintendo Gamer* is a family magazine, I can't really

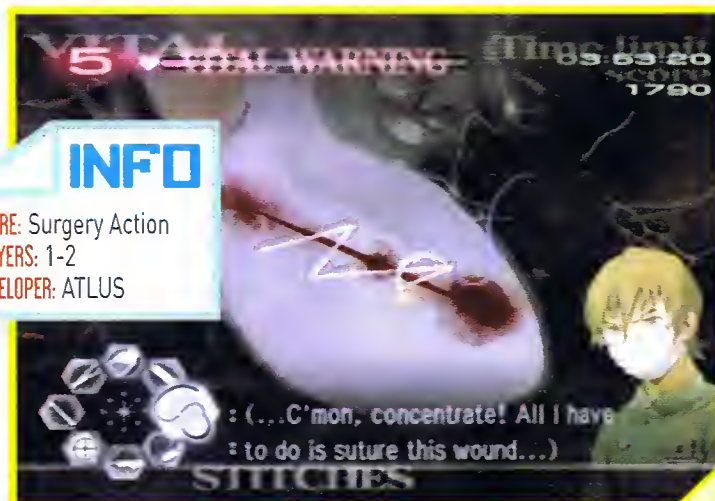
talk about that too much. Let's just say that sometimes Google Image Search is NOT your friend and ... um ... let's leave it at that.

Anyhow, getting back to the subject at hand: *Sonic and the Secret Rings* could very well be the first 3D *Sonic* game ever made that's actually any good. Its primary virtue is its simplicity. This is the *Sonic* formula distilled

down to its core ingredients – i.e. running really fast through vibrant fantasy environments. There are no obnoxious new characters, no stupid RPG elements, and no gats with which to perform a drive-by-shooting. When you begin a level, *Sonic* starts running automatically and he doesn't stop until he's either dead or at the finish line. The idea is for you to steer him

by holding the Wii-controller like a NES pad and tilting it side-to-side a la *Excite Truck*. There are obstacles to avoid, enemies to kill, and special abilities to use. And that's pretty much the whole game right there.

Sound like fun? Of course it does. That's why we're going to do a big preview feature on it in our next issue. Make sure to check it out!



INFO

GENRE: Surgery Action
PLAYERS: 1-2
DEVELOPER: ATLUS

TRAUMA CENTRE

Do you remember the board game *Operation*? The one where you used forceps/tweezers to remove various bits out of a hapless patient's insides? And the stress that came when you – whoops! – touched the sides causing failure? Well *Trauma Centre* is the updated videogame form of *Operation*, made possible by the innovative controls of the Wii.

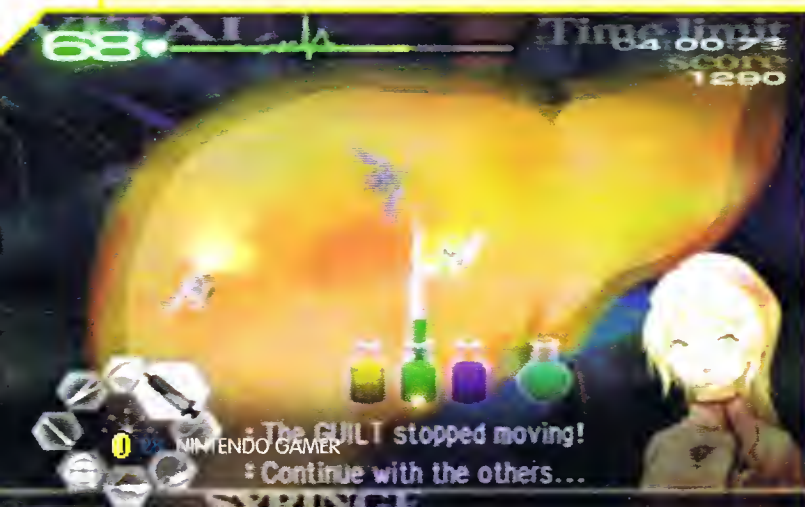
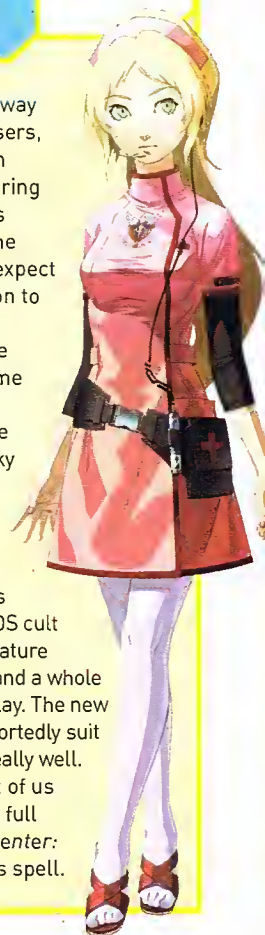
And it's a helluva lot cooler than *Operation*, too. Based around the appearance of a mysterious parasite known as G.U.I.L.T. (Gangliated Utophin Immuno Latency Toxin for all you lovers of pseudo-medical terminology), *Trauma Center: Second Opinion* plays like a modern ER drama complete with a story full of plot twists and tense life-saving medical procedures.

Playing as hotshot surgeon Derek Stiles, patients are operated on using the Wii remote to simulate the various medical tools on offer. Procedures include making incisions, draining excess

fluids, burning away objects using lasers, removing foreign objects and suturing cuts and wounds – basically, all the stuff that you'd expect a regular surgeon to be able to do.

And what of the DS title of the same name, *Trauma Centre: Under the Knife*? Those lucky enough to have played it will be pleased to know that while *Second Opinion* is a remake of the DS cult classic, it does feature updated visuals and a whole new chapter to play. The new controls also reportedly suit the Wii remote really well.

As for the rest of us – be prepared to full under *Trauma Center: Second Opinion*'s spell.





INFO

GENRE: Fighting
PLAYERS: 1-2
DEVELOPER: Dimpis

DRAGONBALL Z: BUDOKAI TENKAICHI 2

As closet *Dragon Ball Z* fans we quite enjoyed the incredible fan-service fighting game that was *DBZ Budokai Tenkaichi* on the PS2. So what's new with its sequel - *Budokai Tenkaichi 2* - on Wii? We put the question to Donny Clay, the game's US Producer:

"First off, the game features an improved camera system, explosive environmental damage and in-game transformations. Second, the character selection is amazing:

there's over 100 characters (new and old) to choose from and our team has been extraordinary at making each character and their supermoves unique. And third, for newcomers interested in getting into the series and for fans who want the complete mythology, this is THE game for it."

Spanning almost the entire *Dragon Ball* mega-series in terms of characters and story, *BT2* certainly seems comprehensive from a fan's point of view. But

what has most Goku wannabes particularly interested is the Wii's motion sensing controls and how they work in combat. While most fighting moves will be performed using a combination of buttons on the Wii Remote and the Nunchuk's thumbstick, special moves are another thing altogether. How does mimicking your favourite *DBZ* character's signature special moves in real life to pull them off in-game sound? Otaku-cool, that's how.



INFO

GENRE: Hammer Action!
PLAYERS: TBC
DEVELOPER: Nintendo Software Technology

PROJECT H.A.M.M.E.R.

Project H.A.M.M.E.R. may be an incredibly stupid (and hopefully very temporary) name for a game, but the premise behind it is rock solid. The basic idea is that you're a cyborg from the future who wields a giant hammer. And what you do is hit aliens with the hammer. By swinging the Wiimote.

Like a hammer. Also, whenever you hit an alien really hard (with the hammer), M.C. Hammer pops up and offers encouragement in the form of an inspirational rap song. Actually, that last bit isn't true at all. We just made it up. But the rest is true, so ... so there you go. It's ... hammer time?



SUPER SWING GOLF

Genre: Action
Players: 1-2
Developer: SNK
It was only a matter of time. *Wii Sports* served as a perfect introduction to the Wii's new and unique control scheme. Now here's a full golf game to add to your collection, based on the anime-cool *PangYa*.



RESIDENT EVIL Wii

Genre: Survival Horror
Players: TBC
Developer: Capcom
With *Resident Evil 4* on GCN such a brilliant example of survival horror, interest is high in this Wii-exclusive *RE* game. Leon returns, and the game will make full use of the Wii's unique controls. We can't wait!



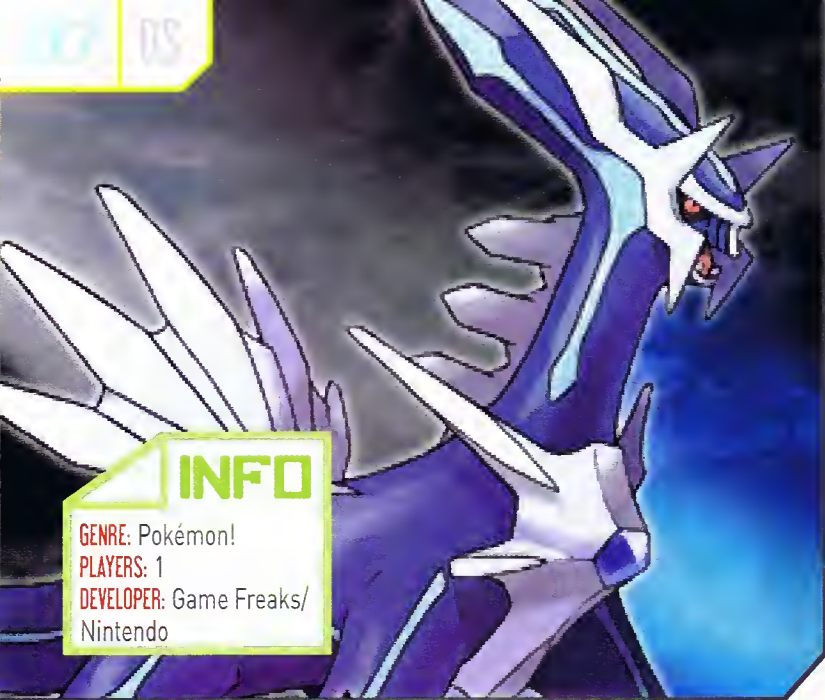
WII MUSIC

Genre: Music
Players: TBC
Developer: Nintendo EAD
In a famous display during the unveiling of the Wii's controller in 2005, Mario creator Shigeru Miyamoto was seen acting as a conductor using the Wiimote. This is that game; a collection of music games.



ELEBITS

Genre: Hide n Seek
Players: 1-4
Developer: Konami
In an alternate reality cute little creatures called elebits are the source of power and for some reason or another, they've gone AWOL. You've gotta find them in this charming looking game of hide and seek.



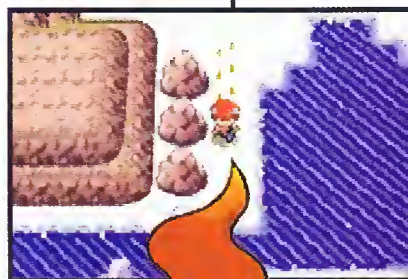
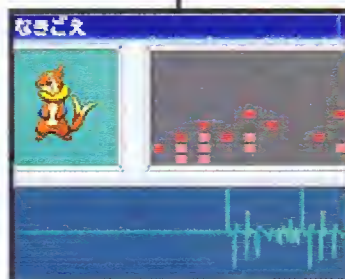
INFO

GENRE: Pokémon!

PLAYERS: 1

DEVELOPER: Game Freaks/
Nintendo

POKÉMON: DIAMOND & PEARL



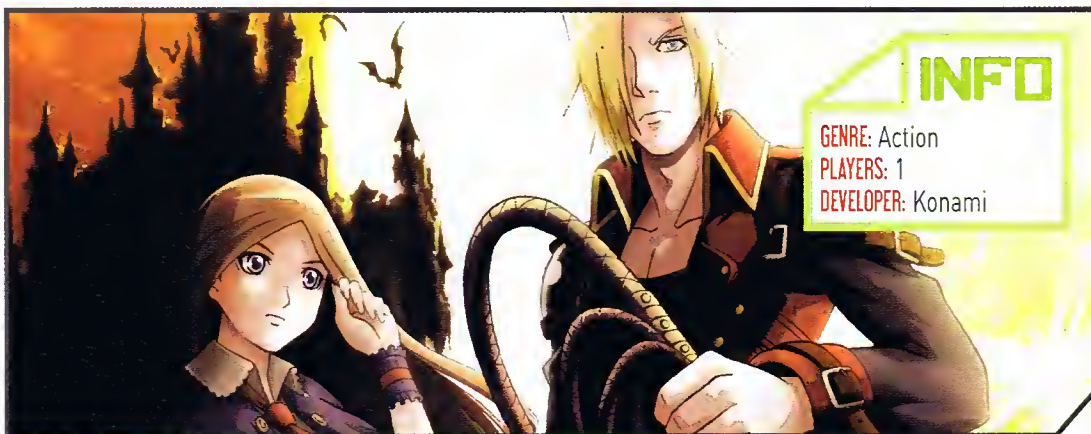
... that's about it. Oh, wait! I almost forgot – there's a new team too: the fabulously named Team Galaxy. Annnnd ... yeah, okay, that's it.

If you've never played a Pokémon game before, *Diamond* and *Pearl* will be addictive and flawlessly designed action-RPGs that you'll end up playing for months and months. For the rest of us, it'll be same old Pokémon with a few added features in a shiny new box.

Pokémon is a franchise built on incremental improvement. Almost every game in the series is an update of a previous game: *Gold* and *Silver*, *Ruby* and *Sapphire*, and *Leaf Green* and *Fire Red* are all updates of the basic formula that began with *Red* and *Blue*. Given this long history of repetition, it's probable that *Diamond* and *Pearl* will be just like all the other Pokémons, except with different boxes and a few changes to play around with.

What kind of changes? Well, there are a few new Pokémon

to catch, including Dialga and Palkia – two new Legendaries who have the power to control space and time respectively. Of course, Einstein demonstrated that space and time are part of the same continuum, so I dunno what the difference is there. Maybe they've got different physics in Pokémon Land. Anyway, other new features include a real-time day-night cycle that affects the behaviour of Pokémon and NPCs, some sort of new classification system for Pokémon gender, and a wireless multiplayer mode. And that's



INFO

GENRE: Action

PLAYERS: 1

DEVELOPER: Konami

CASTLEVANIA PORTRAIT OF RUIN

The *Castlevania* series has been around since the days of the original NES and has seen all manner of different forms. From its origins as a side-scrolling 2D action game to the promising yet lacklustre (*Only lacklustre? – Ed.*) 3D versions on the N64, there's one clear turning point for the series: *Symphony of the Night*. Regarded as the pinnacle of the *Castlevania* series, the game borrowed heavily from

Super Metroid's design book and put players in a gigantic 2D gothic castle which would allow further exploration only as key items or new abilities were discovered.

So why all this hoopla about *SotN* when we're supposed to be talking *Portrait of Ruin*? Well, the template created by *SotN* has lived on thanks to Nintendo's handhelds with three equally brilliant games to be found on GBA, and the excellent

follow-up *Dawn of Sorrow* on DS. All of these are worth tracking down if you've never played them before.

And *PoR* is but the latest in the series of brilliant Dracula-hunting games. This time the action ventures outside of Dracula's castle (fans needn't worry: Vlad's pad is still in), and features two playable characters which can be hot-swapped during play. We'll have a review in next issue!



INFO

GENRE: RPG
PLAYERS: 1
DEVELOPER: Square Enix

FINAL FANTASY III

feature a deep and enjoyable job system. Allowing players to change class to allow for new abilities (warriors would be powerful weapon wielders with plenty of armour for example, while the more delicate thief could steal from their opponents), this job system proved so popular that it cemented *FF* as Japan's most loved RPG series and has been re-used in a number of subsequent *FF* adventures since.

Final Fantasy III also has the honour of being the only game in the *FF* series to never be released

outside of Japan. Until now that is. Using the increased power of the DS, this is a complete remake of the game featuring updated visuals and touch-screen functionality. And while there have been small changes made to the story and locations to suit the new 3D style (think *FFVII* visuals), this is an otherwise faithful remake of the original.

Due in the first half of the year (March, hopefully), *FFIII* is an interesting proposition. We're curious to see how well the 15 year old game concept has aged.



Ask Japanese gamers who are old enough which *Final Fantasy* game is their favourite and *FFIII* pops up almost as much as series classics *FFVII* and *FFX* do. And the reason? Certainly not the multimedia experiences of the later titles. Released in Japan in 1990 on the NES, the rather primitive looking *FFIII* was the first *FF* game to



THEME PARK DS

Have you been to an amusement park lately? Sure, the rides are mostly a blast but how about those queues, eh? And the ride duration? Feel a bit let down that you've spent 40 minutes waiting in line for a ride that lasts not much longer than 40 seconds? Do you think you could do it better yourself?

Well now you can. An updated version of Bullfrog's 1994 classic, *Theme Park DS* lets you build an amusement park from scratch and run it as you'd see fit. Featuring a good balance of design and management play, *Theme Park DS* has you choosing the layout of your park and then placing the rides



INFO

GENRE: Sim
PLAYERS: 1
DEVELOPER: EA

that'll go into it. Once you're ready, you open the gates and watch as customers put your park through its paces. Of course, that's where the real fun begins: running your park successfully requires a fine balance of ticket and food pricing, employee management and park upkeep. Oh, and new rides too!



MARIO VS DONKEY KONG 2: MARCH OF THE MINIS

Genre: Puzzle
Players: TBC
Developer: Nintendo
The original *Mario vs. Donkey Kong* on GBA was a brilliant little puzzle game. This sequel's more of the same, however this time you're leading an army of minis through devious levels.



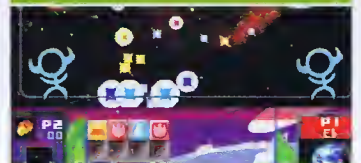
WARIO: MASTER OF DISGUISE

Genre: Puzzle action
Developer: TBC
Developer: Suzak
Controlled primarily with the touch-screen, *Master of Disguise* is a side-scrolling platformer that seems to be something of a cross between *Super Princess Peach* and *Yoshi's Touch & Go*.



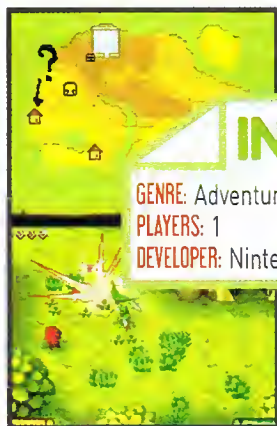
HARVEST MOON DS

Genre: Farming
Players: TBC
Developer: Nintendo EAD
Trumped only by the brilliance of *Animal Crossing*, the long running *Harvest Moon* series focuses on farm life – raising crops, tending to your livestock and generally trying to turn a profit with the town nearby.



METEOS: DISNEY MAGIC

Genre: Puzzle
Players: TBC
Developer: Q Entertainment
The original *Meteos* is hands-down the best puzzle game on DS. If you haven't played it before, it's kind of like Tetris in space. And this one is *Meteos* with a Disney slant. Hey, it's more *Meteos*. We can't wait!



INFO

GENRE: Adventure
PLAYERS: 1
DEVELOPER: Nintendo

Menu

LEGEND OF ZELDA: PHANTOM HOURGLASS

As the first *Zelda* game on DS and a direct sequel to the immensely popular *Wind Waker* on GameCube, it's clear that *Phantom Hourglass* has some pretty HUGE expectations to live up to. Whereas most games can get away with just being well designed, this one also needs to be traditional enough to please purists, innovative enough to satisfy critics, and accessible enough to rope-in series newcomers. It needs to be, like, the super-combo meal of videogames. Fortunately, that seems to be exactly what designer Eiji Aonuma has set out to make.

To appease the purists, there's the distinctive cel-shaded visuals, traditional top-down gameplay, returning characters such as Tetra and (we think) Navi, and – of course – all the old items, enemies, and other *Zelda* idiosyncrasies we know and love. On the innovation front, there's touch-screen driven controls, the ability to mark dungeon maps with notes and drawings, and a variety of new puzzles and bosses that take advantage of the DS's unique features. And for newcomers, the mechanics have been streamlined and made more accessible – a trait exemplified by a new sailing

system that (unlike the one in *Wind Waker*) should actually make travelling by boat an enjoyable, tedium-free experience.

Of course, whether or not this "all things to all people" approach will end up making for a good game remains to be seen. But ... you know ... this is Nintendo ... and it's *Zelda* ... so we're pretty sure it's going to end up okay.



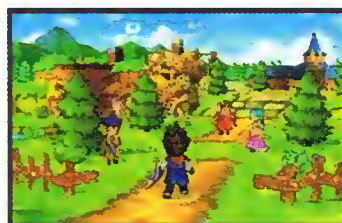
LUNAR KNIGHTS

Lunar Knights is the latest sequel in the *Boktai* series. Like its predecessors, it's an action-RPG where the goal is to kill vampires – kind of like what *Zelda* would be if Link listened to The Cure and wore black all the time. Its key feature is its emphasis on the weather as a game mechanic. Changes to the in-game climate directly affect your characters (of which there are two) by granting bonuses, imposing penalties, and altering the environment. So when there's a thunderstorm, for example, flashes of lightning will occasionally illuminate new paths and reveal hidden items. Just like they do in real life.

People who played the previous *Boktai* games – which came with solar-sensors – will probably tell you they were enjoyable but flawed RPGs that ultimately suffered from the very gimmicks that made them interesting to begin with. Here's hoping *Lunar Knights* doesn't end up the same.

INFO

GENRE: RPG
PLAYERS: 1 • DEVELOPER: Kojima Productions



industry – this could be relevant to your interests too. Do you like RPGs with impeccable design, high production-values, and compelling narratives? Yes? Then *DQIX* will be your kind of game. We say this with certainty – despite the fact that the game is not even close to being finished – because we have faith. We faith in the *DQ* franchise, we have faith in developer Level-5, and (of course) we have faith in Nintendo. Trust us on this: *DQIX* is going to be great. You just see if it isn't.



DRAGON QUEST IX

Square Enix generated quite a bit of excitement when it announced that the next instalment of the incredibly popular *Dragon Quest* series would be DS exclusive. The *DQ* games are BIG business in Japan (even more so than *Final Fantasy*), so the franchise's sudden

shift from a Sony home console to a Nintendo portable has some major implications – and says much about the considerable influence Nintendo has over Japanese developers at the moment.

It's pretty big news, is what I'm saying. And not just for the





INFO

GENRE: Platform
PLAYERS: 2
DEVELOPER: Flagship



KIRBY SQUEAK SQUAD

In contrast to the delightful experiment that was *Kirby Canvas Curse*, *Kirby Squeak Squad* sees Nintendo's marshmallow hero revisiting the conventional gameplay that made him famous. We're talking back-to-basics *Kirby* – jumping on platforms, sucking up enemies, and collecting treasure chests. But we're also talking new stuff too. Like Kirby's stomach. Apparently, you can poke it with a stick now.

In the old *Kirby* games, you see, you would suck up an enemy and then Kirby would automatically

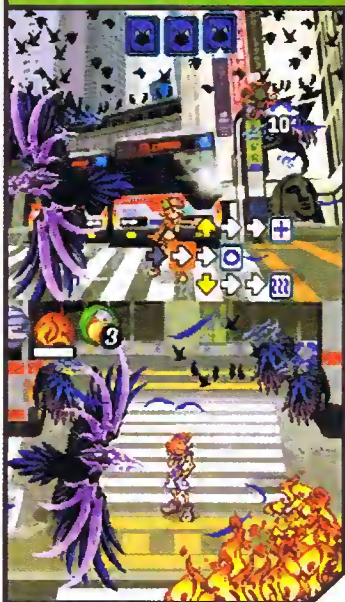
take on their powers. But in *Squeak Squad*, Kirby stores the carcasses of his hated foes in his stomach, the contents of which are displayed on the bottom screen. So to active power-ups, all you have to do is touch them with the stylus. You can also use the stylus to drag one enemy over to another and combine their powers; so if you consume a fire guy and sword guy, for instance, you can combine them in Kirby's stomach to create a fire-sword power-up. The whole game is like a gastro-intestinal

chemistry kit – which is kind of gross, but also kind of cool. So I guess that makes it ... what? Groot?

Sure, why not. *Kirby Squeak Squad* is the groolest game you'll play all year. It's too grool for school. Tell your friends and receive a free bumper sticker.



IT'S A WONDERFUL WORLD



Designed by Tetsuya Nomura and his *Kingdom Hearts* team, *It's a Wonderful World* is a modern-day RPG set in Tokyo's trendy Shibuya district. The story focuses on two characters – a young empathic boy named Neku, and a mysterious girl named Shiki – who are forced by circumstance into a strange game of death by the evil Shinigami Corp. Apparently, Neku and Shiki have seven days to win the game (the rules and content of which we know nothing about) or face what is referred to by the Japanese developers as "existence negation". That could just be a fancy way of saying "death", or it could be something entirely different. Either way, it sounds unpleasant.

To tell the truth, we only heard

about *It's a Wonderful Life* a few hours ago, and we already think it looks totally rad. If you go to the game's official website (<http://www.SquareEnix.co.jp/subarashiki/>) you can watch some videos of the strange dual-screened combat system in action and also listen to some fragments of what we guess will be the funkiest game soundtrack since *Jet Set Radio Future*. The only downer is that we don't yet know if it's going to get released anywhere outside Japan. But it bloody well better – otherwise Dan shall be most upset. Which isn't pretty.

INFO

GENRE: RPG
PLAYERS: 1
DEVELOPER: Square Enix

MINI PREVIEW



FINAL FANTASY XII: REVENANT WINGS

Genre: RPG
Players: 1
Developer: Square Enix
A spin-off in the same vein as *FFX-2*, *Revenant Wings* sees *FFXII* protagonists Vaan and Penelo return as professional sky-pirates on the hunt for adventure and treasure.



IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

Genre: Action/Adventure
Players: 1
Developer: System 3
Oh, man. We've been waiting for this for such a long time. When it was released on the C64 in the late 1980s, *Impossible Mission* was the absolute pinnacle of action/adventure games. This remake looks awesome!



FRONT MISSION: FIRST

Genre: Tactical RPG
Players: 1
Developer: Square Enix
A remake of the original *Front Mission* for SNES, *Front Mission 1st* is a tactical-RPG, somewhat similar to *Final Fantasy Tactics Advance*, but with mechs instead. We can't wait.



FRESHLY-PICKED TINGLE'S ROSE COLOURED RUPEE LAND

Genre: RPG
Players: 1
Developer: Vanpool
Otherwise known as "The Frugal Adventures of One of the Most Annoying Zelda Characters Ever Created." Essentially, a spin-off RPG starring a Link ex-sidekick.



INFO

GENRE: RPG
PLAYERS: 4
DEVELOPER: Square Enix

INFO

GENRE: N/A
PLAYERS: 1
DEVELOPER: Skip Ltd.

CHOCOBO AND THE MAGIC PICTURE BOOK

As an enduring icon of the *Final Fantasy* series, the humble chocobo has starred in a number of spin-off games over the years – and all of them have been crap. But *Chocobo and the Magic Picture Book* looks PRETTY OKAY. So let's talk about it!

The story goes something like



this: an ordinary yellow chocobo (inventively named Chocobo) is playing in a field one day when an evil Black Mage shows up and sucks him and all his friends into a magic demon book. Dunno why; Black Mages are just jerks like that. Anyhow, the point is that it's up to Chocobo to make his way through the book and rescue all his friends. So that's what you do during the game – you go from page-to-page, fighting enemies, completing mini-games, and finding secrets, all while looking for other chocobos to rescue.

All in all, it's a fairly standard Square Enix setup, except it's super-cute and doesn't feature any whiny ladyboys. We think. At any rate, the card-based battling system (reminiscent of the system in *Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories*) seems nice and deep, and many of the aforementioned mini-games are quite clever in that special DS-eey kind of way. As we said, it all looks PRETTY OKAY. We'd rather see a Moogles RPG, but oh well.

CHIBI-ROBO: PARK PATROL

It isn't very often that you can use the term "feel-good" to describe a videogame, but in the case of *Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol*, it's entirely justified.

Like the original *Chibi-Robo* on GameCube, it follows the adventures of an adorable little robot as it wanders around doing good deeds in an effort to make people happy. And since this one takes place in a giant park instead of a tiny Japanese house, the number of good deeds available to Chibi has increased substantially. For example, whenever you see dead flowers, a record-player will appear on the touch-screen – use the stylus the scratch the record and Chibi will do a robot dance, thus bringing the flowers back to life. How does breakdancing serve to reinvigorate dead flora? The answer is MAGIC. Also, cuteness. Speaking of which, look at him in that screenshot – he's riding on a rainbow swing! Hee hee! So adorable!



HOTEL DUSK: Room 215

Released to relative obscurity in 2005, *Another Code* was a fun little adventure game primarily notable for its odd narrative and creative use of the DS hardware. Although it didn't sell very well in Australia, it must've done okay overseas, because developer Cing has made a new game in the same style: *Hotel Dusk: Room 215*.

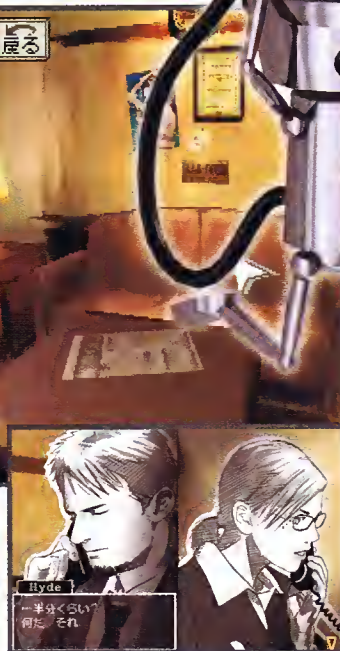
It tells the story of Karl Hyde, a cynical ex-cop whose search for a missing friend

INFO

GENRE: Adventure
PLAYERS: 1
DEVELOPER: Cing

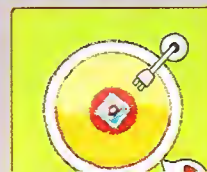
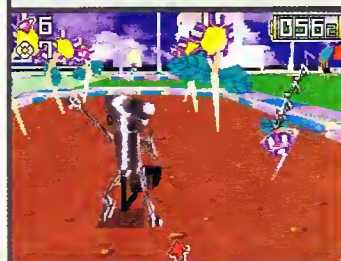
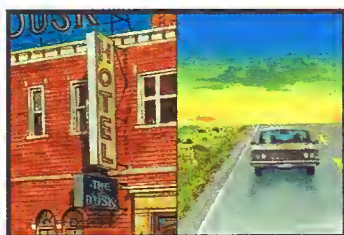
leads him to a mysterious abandoned hotel rumoured to contain a room

capable of granting wishes – like a genie. Like *Another Code*, gameplay consists mainly of finding clues, solving puzzles, and questioning other characters. As you can see from the screenshots, the game has a very cool noir feel to it, with all the characters rendered in



striking black-and-white on full-colour backgrounds.

Since we enjoyed *Another Code* so much, we're kind of hanging out for *Hotel Dusk* – so it's a good thing it's out next month. Expect a full review next issue!





INFO

GENRE: Rhythm
PLAYERS: 1
DEVELOPER: Skip Ltd.



ELITE BEAT AGENTS

Elite Beat Agents is the Westernised counterpart of *Osu! Tatakae! Ouendan* – a DS game that you probably wouldn't know about unless you a) frequent videogame message boards, or b) hang around with Japan-o-philes. So lemme summarise it for you.

Ouendan is a rhythm game based on a very strange premise. It chronicles the trials and tribulations of a professional cheer-squad as they go around and help people overcome adversity by ... uh ... dancing for them. Stages

usually follow a set pattern: first a cut-scene plays depicting characters in distress; then somebody calls out "Ouendan!" and summons the cheer-squad; then the cheer-squad arrives and dances to Japanese pop music; and finally the problem is solved and everybody goes away happy. Now, your job during all this is to make sure the cheer-squad dances well by tapping, stroking, and circling the touch-screen in time with the aforementioned Japanese pop music. And that's pretty much the whole game for you.

Anyway, *EBA* is just like that – except it has Western music instead of J-Pop. Also, the situations are different and the cheer-squad guys don't look like Nazis anymore. But other than that and a few minor gameplay tweaks, it's pretty much the same deal. So if solving problems through the power of dance sounds like something you're down with – AND IT SHOULD – then maybe you should check *EBA* out. Or maybe wait for our review and THEN check it out. Actually, yes: that sounds better. Do that.



PHOENIX WRIGHT: ACE ATTORNEY JUSTICE FOR ALL

Because she imported it from Japan some time ago, I just asked Sally the Art Director what she thinks of *Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney – Justice for All*. Her response was a lengthy rhapsody on the game's many good points, which include but are not limited to its superior dialogue, fun story, and pleasantly logical game design. She heartily recommends it, saying that it's way better than the first *Phoenix Wright* (which wasn't released here) and generally a pretty rad game all

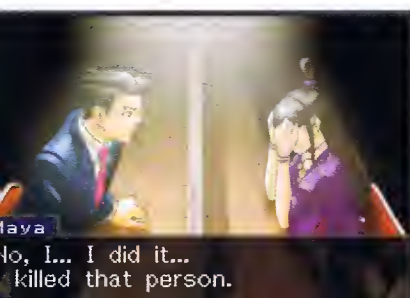
round. So! There you go: Sally says buy *Phoenix Wright*. Even though this isn't a review. She says buy it anyway.

(By the way, if you've never heard of *Phoenix Wright* before, it's a series of popular adventure games where you play the role of a defense attorney. The goal is to defend your client from false charges by collecting clues, interviewing suspects, and – ultimately – arguing your case in court. The first game was pretty fun, so we're pleased the sequel is actually coming out here. And you should be too.)



INFO

GENRE: Lawyer-sim
PLAYERS: 1
DEVELOPER: Capcom



NOT DEAD YET!

The GBA, that is...



FINAL FANTASY V & VI

Genre: RPG
Players: 1
Developer: Square Enix
Originally released for the SNES during its heyday in the 90s, *Final Fantasy V* and *VI* are arguably two of the best Japanese RPGs ever made. *FFVI*, in particular, is an absolute masterpiece, combining brilliant storytelling, robust mechanics, a glorious soundtrack, and some of the greatest and most memorable characters you will ever encounter in a videogame. We say this whenever we talk about *FFVI*, and it bears repeating here: Kefka is the best villain in the entire history of gaming. At one point, he poisons an entire town of innocent women and children (and they're ONLY women and children), and then stands there GIGGLING about it. He's evilly rad to the max. So yeah, all that's left to be said is: get them.



PLUS...

YGGDRA UNION: A tactical RPG from Sting, the makers of the very excellent and very unavailable-in-Australia *Riveria: The Promised Land*. Looks gorgeous.

MOTHER 3: Latest sequel to a seminal RPG series that, although enormously popular in Japan, never saw the light of day in PAL territories. Received a fairly positive reception in the US, so has a decent chance of making it here eventually.

BIT-GENERATIONS: Series of stylish experimental games released at a budget-price.

AND DON'T FORGET! This is just the start. Remember to check back with *Nintendo Gamer* for more in-depth coverage of all these games and more! Hooray!

GAME OF THE MONTH

P.38 **THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS** (Wii)

It may have been a long wait, but *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess* has been worth it. But is it the best *Zelda* game ever created? Turn to page 38 to find out.



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GLOSSARY

Gaming terms explained



Action: A style of game characterised by their emphasis on visceral and reflexive acts, such as running, jumping, and fighting (e.g. *Red Steel*, *Viewtiful Joe*)

Adventure: A style of game that focuses on almost exclusively narrative, exploration, and puzzle solving. Not very common on consoles, though there are notable exceptions (e.g. *Another Code*)

Fighting: A type of action game that emphasises one-on-one, martial-arts driven combat. Fighting games come in two distinct flavours: 2D and 3D. Examples of 2D fighting games include *Street Fighter II* and (to a lesser extent) *Super Smash Bros. Melee*. 3D fighting games, which tend to be more realistic, are exemplified by titles such as *Virtua Fighter* and *Soul Calibur II*

First person shooter (FPS): A type of action game characterised by its emphasis on gun combat and its use of the first-person perspective to simulate the protagonist's point-of-view (e.g. *Call of Duty 3*, *Metroid Prime Hunters*)

GBA: The Nintendo Game Boy Advance

Minigame: A small, usually simplistic game contained within another, larger game (e.g. the touch-screen games in *Super Mario 64 DS*)

Multipayer: A feature that enables multiple people to play the same game at once, either on a single console with multiple controllers (e.g. *Wii Sports*), or on different consoles linked together via a network (e.g. ad hoc and online multiplayer in *Mario Kart DS*)

N64: Nintendo's Nintendo 64 console, circa 1997-2002

NES: Nintendo's Nintendo Entertainment System, circa 1986-2002

Nunchuk: A controller extension that is plugged into the base of the Wii Remote. Used in many games, including *Wii Sports*, *Red Steel*, and *Call of Duty 3*

Party Game: A style of multiplayer game specifically developed to be played in a social context. Most party games are made up of a variety of mini-games strung together by an overarching theme (e.g. *Mario Party*, *Super Monkey Ball*)

Platform Game: A type of action game in which the player must navigate treacherous environments by performing a variety of acrobatic feats. Like fighting games, platform games (also called 'platformers') are generally divided into two main categories: 2D (such as *Super Mario World*) and 3D (such as *Super Mario 64 DS*)

Puzzle: A style of game in which the player employs a variety of cognitive skills to solve puzzles, the type of which varies from game to game. Some common types include logical (e.g. *Minesweeper*), spatial (e.g. *Tetris*), or abstract (e.g. *Meteos*)

Rhythm Game: A type of game in which the goal is to enter a sequence of commands (sometimes via a special peripheral) in time with a musical beat – usually represented by a series of on-screen prompts (e.g. *Dancing Stage Mario Mix*, *Donkey Konga*)

Roleplaying Game (RPG): Role-playing games emphasise story and character building over action. They usually take players on long quests to save the world from a dastardly evil and involve stuff like stat-points, levelling up and lots of talking (e.g. *Zelda: Twilight Princess*, *Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time*)

Simulation (Sim): A type of game that aims to simulate a real-world activity with a relatively high degree of accuracy. Mostly confined to the PC, notable examples of the genre on Nintendo platforms include *The Sims* (a people sim) and *Theme Park DS* (a park management sim)

SNES: Nintendo's Super Nintendo Entertainment System, circa 1992-1997

Strategy: Strategy games are all about careful planning. They often involve activities like commanding troops, building bases and managing resources such as money, oil and wood (e.g. *Final Fantasy Tactics Advance*, *Battalion Wars*)

VC: Virtual Console, a utility which allows older generation games to be played on the Wii

Wiiote: Another name for the Wii Remote

Wi-Fi: A wireless network standard which allows the Wii and DS to connect to the internet (and in the case of DS, other DS consoles)

WHAT WE'RE PLAYING THIS MONTH

Q: Which Wii launch title is your pick of the bunch?



March Stepnik (Editor)

"Wii Sports. Bowling has become a daily occurrence. Several times a day, actually."

1. *Wii Sports* (Wii)
2. *Castlevania Dawn of Sorrow* (DS)
3. *Age of Empires* (DS)



Dan Staines (Deputy Editor)

"Excite Truck ... OH, WAIT, THAT WASN'T A LAUNCH TITLE HERE."

1. *Wii Sports* (Wii)
2. *Final Fantasy XII* (PS2)
3. *Mario Kart DS* (DS)



Sally Woellner (Art Director)

"Zelda. It's shiny and it makes stabbing things fun!"

1. *Zelda: Twilight Princess* (Wii)
2. *Phoenix Wright: Justice For All* (DS)
3. *Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence* (PS2)



Anthony Corbett (Contributor)

"Red Steel. It's cool. That, and because I haven't played Zelda yet."

1. *Osu! Tatakae! Ouendan* (DS - Import)
2. *Rhythm Tengoku* (GBA - Import)
3. *Red Steel* (Wii)

The Nintendo Gamer Score System

All games reviewed in Nintendo Gamer are scored out of 100. The following is a concise rundown of how our score ranges break down:



Games that score in the 0-49 range are inferior and unworthy of your consideration. Avoid them.



Games that score in the 50-79 range are decent – but unworthy of unreserved recommendation. Try before you buy.



Games that score in the 80-94 range are excellent and definitely worth purchasing. Add these to your collection whenever possible.



Games that score in the 95-100 range are absolute masterpieces that no self-respecting gamer can afford to miss out on. You MUST buy these games.



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS

Kosta Andreadis ventures into the Twilight Realm...

INFO WII/GCN

GENRE: Action Adventure

DEVELOPER: Nintendo

RATING: PG

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1

IN BRIEF:

In *Legend of Zelda*, you actually play the part of boy hero Link. Usually set in the land of Hyrule, Link's fate is inevitably intertwined with the destinies of the princess Zelda and the evil figure Ganondorf.

EXERT-O-METER

There may be motion-based controls in this *Zelda*, but things remain comfortable over the long haul.

Before you can celebrate your first victory, a close friend is kidnapped by a group of large beasts and in an act of defiance and provocation, gets strung up on a pole. Although you could turn and run away you decide to cross the line from boy into man, embrace your destiny, and head straight into battle. On horseback you take to the vast fields of Hyrule, battling foe upon foe to reach and hopefully save your kidnapped and seemingly unconscious friend. This moment occurs early on in *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess* and although at its core the fundamental nature of the gameplay hasn't changed all that much since its debut on the NES, as a series, *The Legend of Zelda* has always grown from strength to strength in the type of story it tells. Having done away with any lingering and continuing story between each game, Nintendo have instead chosen to reinvent the series with each new game providing familiarity only in surroundings, certain characters and gameplay. Still on horseback, you close in on your captured friend and find yourself charging across a narrow bridge as the sun sets in a large distant orange haze. With

sword in hand you quickly dodge your oncoming foe and in one well timed sword stroke send him over the edge, saving the day. In this, a spectacular display of art direction, gameplay, intensity and emotion *Twilight Princess* proves itself to be the *Zelda* game many have been waiting for, an experience that takes the series to epic new heights.

A LINK TO THE PAST

Ocarina of Time on the Nintendo 64 is considered by many to be a defining moment in gaming history, and possibly even one of the greatest videogames ever made. For those that have played the N64 game, a specific nostalgia will permeate throughout the *Twilight Princess* play experience - a feeling of both familiarity and unfamiliarity. *Twilight Princess* shares more similarities with the N64 *Zelda* title than any other recent title in the series mainly due to its similar methodology in creating a vast, cohesive and epic gameplay experience that will satisfy almost any fan of the series. To that effect saying that *Twilight Princess* represents a more mature entry into *The Legend of Zelda* series would be false, to a certain degree.

This is Nintendo reinventing the series once again as an epic adventure game, this time with a canvas so large that it virtually dwarfs their previous attempt. Stating that the more cartoon and animated approach seen in the last title in the *Zelda* franchise, *The Wind Waker* (for GameCube), startled fans enough to see Nintendo create a more 'realistic' looking *Zelda* this time around would also be incorrect. Simply put, in its day, *Ocarina of Time* was the largest investment Nintendo had placed on the creation of a single game - from inception to execution it was epic in every sense of the word. *Twilight Princess* bears similar beginnings, the creation of a title that would take several years of development and one that would surpass *Ocarina of Time* as the most expansive and epic *Zelda* gaming experience ever created. Does it succeed? Yes, and quite spectacularly too.

Twilight Princess sees Link begin his quest as a simple farmer thrust into a large world-changing catastrophe that sees most of his homeland and country engulfed in 'twilight', a state that pits any affected area into an a world of non-existence. Unlike previous



Link felt a little over-dressed

“...Twilight Princess proves itself to be the Zelda game many have have been waiting for...”



Right, now you're just showing off.

entries, *Twilight Princess* begins with no real tutorial mode, nor does it ease you into the control scheme, something that can be taken as both a blessing and a curse. It's actually quite a bold move on Nintendo's part as you literally spend the first few hours of the game working out both your role in the overall story and the many ways in which you can interact with your environment. Once you do reach the first dungeon in the game,

don't expect an easy encounter as the puzzles, enemies and design are all wonderfully complex, as Nintendo effortlessly creates another memorable and challenging *Zelda* experience. Surprisingly, the next several hours of the title follow a strict progression and chain of events that once completed and the overall game 'opens up' so to speak you'll have already invested about 20 hours or so into the game. As such the gameplay in



Flea-ridden Link

Twilight Princess flows unlike any other *Zelda* title before it, although the events and story are still broken down into various 'dungeons' that need to be conquered, the overall scope of the game world itself is so huge that once you've been shown the basics of each key area, you'll begin to realise that in an effort to expand on the epic scope of *Ocarina of Time*, Nintendo have in the process created their biggest game ever.

POINT AND SHOOT

To quickly quash any lingering doubt about how *Twilight Princess* controls using the Nintendo Wii remote and nun chuck combo:



Survey

"Rat-a-tat-tat..."



ZELDA CUBED

Twilight Princess on GameCube is the same game as the Wii version except for two things. Firstly, the 'Cube' version obviously lacks motion-based controls. Two, the game world has been mirrored in the GameCube version. And the effect of mirroring the game world on the games story and puzzles? There is none.



“...works exceptionally well with the Wii control setup...that playing a *Zelda* game with a standard controller would actually feel like a step backwards.”

they work wonderfully, even if they do take a short while to get used to. The first noticeable difference in using the Wii setup to say the GameCube controller, apart from waving the remote to swing Link's sword of course, would be in the comfort department. Without hesitation the Wii controller combo is probably the most comfortable control setup ever made, thanks no doubt to the ability to separate each hand and place them freely and naturally. It's actually quite an incredible achievement by Nintendo and a great outcome (intentional or not) born out of the whole '3D pointing' thing, conventional gameplay has actually become more comfortable to control. The basic concept of 'z-targeting' returns in *Twilight*

Princess, players simply lock onto an enemy and the focus will be on that encounter, virtually identical to the setup seen in other *Zelda* titles. The new control method comes into play when Link uses his bow or sling-shot, where players will use the remote to accurately fire arrows as they see fit, something that works exceptionally well with the Wii control setup, so much so that playing a *Zelda* game with a standard controller would actually feel like a step backwards. Consequently puzzles that involve the use of items and weapons that use the free-look aiming scheme tend to be more complex and expansive, testing the player's ability to accurately control Link's shot, which is definitely a series first.



SUMO FISHING

As in every other *Zelda* game, the main story is just one part of the larger *Zelda* experience. *Twilight Princess* is no exception; there's a whole stack of extra things to see and do. Aside from finding heart pieces to increase Link's overall health and golden bugs to increase the maximum size of your wallet (allowing you to carry more rupees), fishing is perhaps the most innovative thanks to the new Wii Remote and Nunchuk combination. There's more too, but they're definitely best left to be discovered fresh.

TEEN WOLF

As Link travels into the twilight realm to rescue his friends and hometown, he finds himself in the form of a large wolf. Due to reasons unbeknownst at the time, the mystical twilight doesn't seem to have the same negative affects on Link, instead they bestow him with the powerful skills of a beast. A small creature, who resides in the twilight realm, Midna, takes note of Link's newfound abilities and opts to help him in exchange for help of her own. A large portion of the opening half of the game is spent in the twilight realm, much of that in wolf form, helping shape the overall distinct feel of *Twilight Princess*. The concept of duality is no stranger to the *Zelda* series, the whole light world, dark world setup is fundamental to key titles in the series including *A Link to the Past* on SNES. Throughout a large portion of the early game Link finds himself following Midna's every command, an endearing character

whose intentions and motives remain hidden for a large portion of the game. Through the quest to save Hyrule from the twilight, Link will travel to familiar locations such as Kakariko Village, Death Mountain, Hyrule Castle, Lake Hylia and converse and interact with Hyrule's various inhabitants such as the mountain dwelling Goron, the water based Zora, and many others. The size of Hyrule itself is quite huge and travel can be done through Midna via warping to key locations or even on horseback, which at times is the only way to truly appreciate the vast scope of Hyrule as well being the only way to find and discover the game's numerous hidden treasures, locations and side quests.

Unfortunately the game is a visual mixed bag - some areas look absolutely fantastic whilst others suffer from poor texturing and equally poor model detail. Technical prowess in the visual department is only part of the



"Link, really. Fishing sucks."

package, and thankfully the most important aspect, art direction, is exceptional. From the gloomy and quasi-science fiction look and feel of the twilight realm to the large and expansive waterfalls, lakes, forests, and mountains of Hyrule - from an artistic perspective at least, *Twilight Princess* is a resounding success. With that in mind Hyrule has become a fully realised and living world to explore, a true testament to Nintendo's track record of excelling in all departments without focusing merely on one. This is not to say that *Twilight Princess* could look a lot better, it certainly could, but at the end of the day substance takes

precedence over style in this game and the overall experience is all the better for it.

Twilight Princess is a huge undertaking for any gamer - an adventure that never falters from the very beginning filled with countless moments and experiences that will remain fresh for some time to come. It's certainly not without fault, there are far too many rupees and hearts being dropped by enemies and the overall difficulty level should have steadily ramped up throughout the entire game instead leveling out pretty early on. But in

direct relation to *Ocarina of Time*, a title that was release over 8 years ago, *Twilight Princess* is the work of a seasoned development house attempting to outdo their previous efforts, with the creation of the largest, most cinematic and epic *Zelda* game ever made. To that end *Twilight Princess* is a resounding success, and a definite must-buy for all Wii owners.



A HISTORY OF LINK

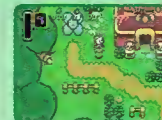
As of *Wind Waker* on GameCube, Nintendo established that each *Zelda* game is actually a standalone adventure not directly connected with the others in the series. Instead, each game tells the story of an ordinary boy who becomes the "hero in the green-felt outfit". Here's how that green felt outfit has changed over the years.

The Legend of Zelda (NES, '87)



The Legend of Zelda II: The Adventure of Link (NES, '88)

The Legend of Zelda III: A Link to the Past (SNES, '92)



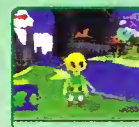
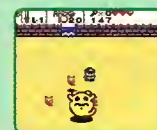
The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening (GB, '94)

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time (N64, '98)



The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask (N64, '00)

The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons/Time (GBC, '01)



The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker (GCN, '03)

The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap (GBA, '04)



The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures (GCN, '05)

VERDICT

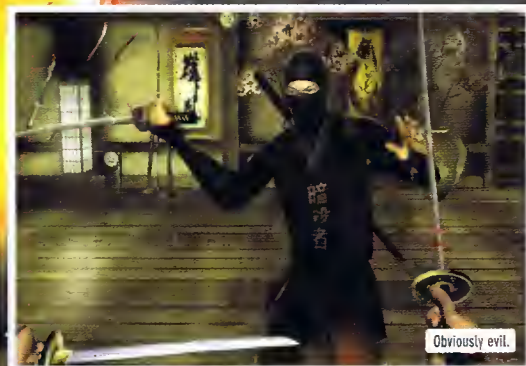
UP: An epic adventure spanning many hours • Great production values • Strong characters

DOWN: A little too easy at times • Muddy visuals

SCORE:

95

MUST BUY



RED STEEL

Ubisoft Paris sends an American to Tokyo in the first FPS developed exclusively for the Wii. What a pity **Anthony Corbett** can't read a map.

INFO

WII

GENRE: First-person shooter

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Paris

RATING: M

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1-4

IN BRIEF:

Red Steel garnered plenty of interest whilst in development thanks to its Wii remote controlled sword and gunplay and its more adult setting. While swordplay features prominently in *Red Steel*, point and shoot gunplay makes up the majority of play.

EXERT-O-METER



You'll constantly be stretching forward to improve your aim and the sword fights are a work out.

After his fiancée is kidnapped by yakuza heavyweights, *Red Steel*'s protagonist Scott Monroe sets out on an epic quest for revenge straight out of the B-movie rulebook. With his intended father-in-law's sacred sword in hand and a horde of thugs desperately in need of a lecture from the barrel of a gun, this generic action story is made considerably more intimate thanks to the Wii's unique controllers. Practically every command you'll utilise in your role of brash American bodyguard requires the use of gestures: from reloading weapons and tossing grenades, to opening doors and activating switches; shaking the nunchuk or Wiimote fills the role of context-sensitive action button very nicely. Whilst adding these new features, the Wii's controls have regrettably made the primary action of any first-person shooter — the manoeuvring of your character and aiming at enemies — an exercise in pure frustration. At least initially. It's nothing that perseverance and adjusting remote sensitivity to your liking won't overcome, but expect to spend at least several hours becoming accustomed to deal with this common occurrence: the view

spiralling into a sickening nose-dive as you shift your aim outside the sensor bar's accepted range time and again. Ugh.

BAKA GAIJIN

Once you do become confident with the controls, however, *Red Steel* begins to feel remarkably intuitive. Constantly seeking cover to avoid fire and heal yourself, holding "A" to steady your aim whilst taking out the ensuing waves of enemies, fire-fights are always tense and prove to be a great deal of fun. *Red Steel* also helpfully allows you to lengthen your view with any weapon, and not just those fitted with scopes; simply lock your view with "A" and extend your arm towards the screen for a better view. Depending on how fast you shift the Wiimote forward, however, you may accidentally trigger a separate feature: Scott's unique "focus" talent.

Focus is the act of temporarily freezing time which allows you to "tag" enemies whilst they're defenceless. You can opt to disarm them by targeting their weapon or merely shoot them outright and once you exit Focus mode, Scott will automatically cycle through his marks. Each second spent

focusing eats through a small meter and without any power the screen will simply jerk forward when attempting to initiate the skill; to regain said power you need simply rattle off a few shots at multiple opponents. It's a wonderful variant on the now-standard bullet-time technique, however activating it when you actually intended to zoom-in on an enemy instead makes you question why the two were given such similar gestures.

Despite this distraction, Focus remains an integral part of *Red Steel*. Obviously it helps when surrounded by multiple foes, but moreso when you can successfully disarm one who has a handy "squad





SLINGSHOTS AND SAMURAIS

Red Steel's control scheme requires a healthy amount of doggedness to conquer, but aside from that and adjusting the Wiimote sensitivity, there's also other, less apparent ways to overcome any aiming imprecision. The cursor has a nasty habit of intermittently leaping from one point to the centre of the screen, then returning. This "rubber band" effect can thankfully be rectified by lowering the wiimote volume and disabling its rumble feature.



leader" symbol floating above their head — every nearby opponent will automatically drop their weapon. Not only is this just plain awesome when you manage to nail it, it also adds a good deal to your stock of "Respect points", the game's bonus unlocking currency that sees honourable behaviour rewarded in the form of new skills.

NOT A SCIENTOLOGIST IN SIGHT!

Naturally, you'll accrue the most respect by not lopping off the heads of defeated adversaries after one of *Red Steel's* many sword fights. Waving the Wiimote up, down, left and right produces an attack with the katana in the corresponding direction, the nunchuk allows you to parry incoming attacks with a smaller, left-handed blade, and dodging is performed by holding left or right on the analogue stick and tapping "C". Even if it can be a little imprecise, the swordplay is intense and breaks the monotony which would surely have set in had *Red Steel* consisted solely of

gunning down wave after wave of enemy yakuza. Practically every level is spent trekking through linear corridors, though the variety of the environments, generally intelligent enemy behaviour and well judged learning curve (aside from the previously mentioned controls) ensure that you'll barely notice a flaw.

This is probably just as well, because *Red Steel* certainly can't rest on its artistic merits — despite a distinctive graphical style being employed during cut-scenes, this really isn't an attractive game, with muddy textures and character models occasionally reminiscent of the N64. The age-old musical device of alerting the player to an enemy's presence has never been more welcome, however, given that you'll want as much warning of your foes as possible. The frantic taiko drumming throughout swordfights also deserves commendation.

Red Steel may be something of a throwback to older console



“Waving the Wiimote up, down, left and right produces an attack with the katana in the corresponding direction...”

shooters, but fortunately it's a damn enjoyable one. Even the split-screen-only multi-player mode is regressive, yet entertaining; just keep in mind that it's a neat addition only, because you're not likely to receive competition from anyone until they sink in the requisite few hours it takes to acclimatise to the controls. Thankfully the single player game is enough challenge on its own — automatically healing whilst remaining still definitely removes a lot of the challenge, but without such an addition the game and its control scheme would simply be unforgiving.



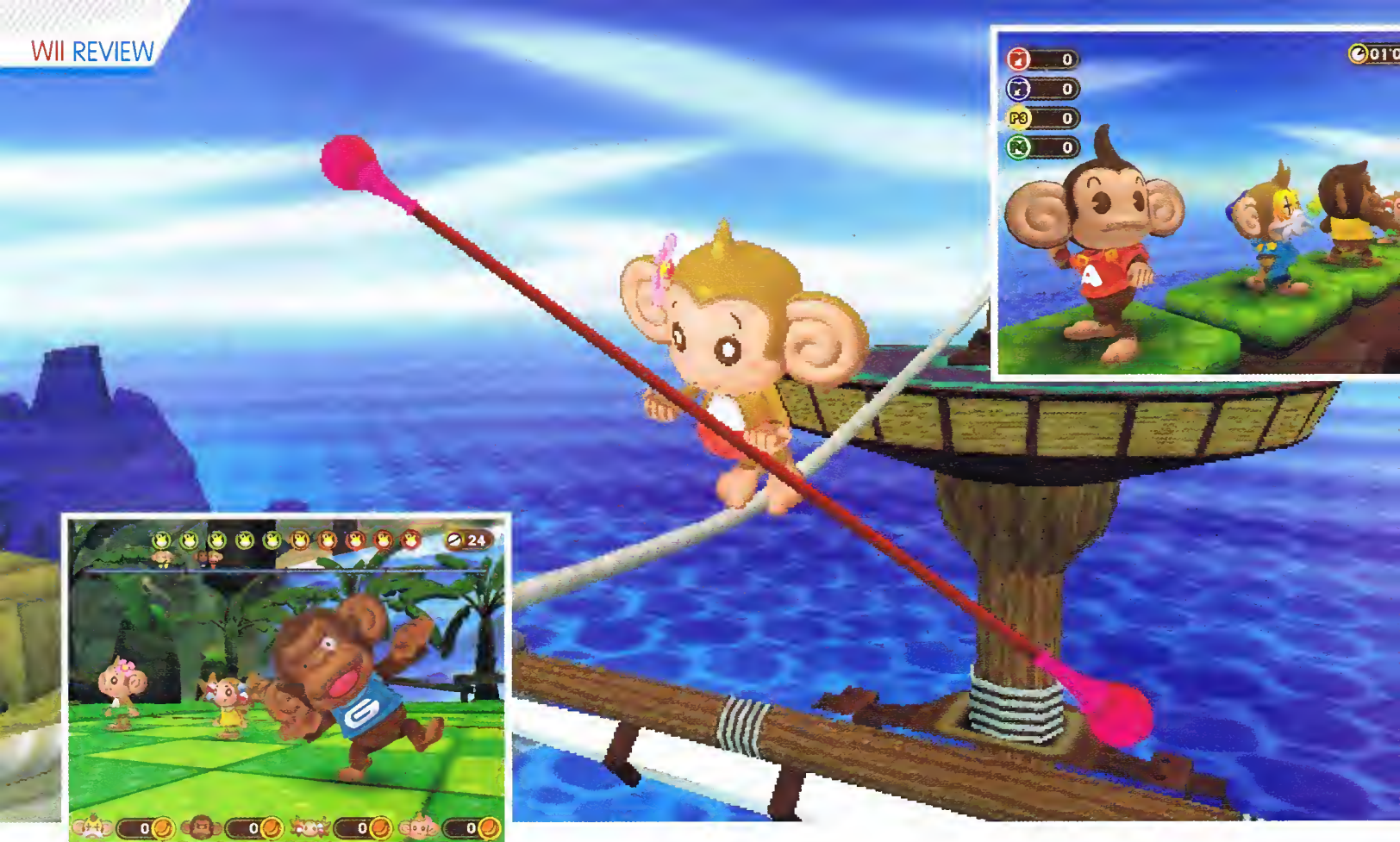
VERDICT

UP: Solid console shooter • Varied gameplay and environments • Focus ability

DOWN: Initially confusing controls • Visually, rather hideous in places • Multi-player's fun, but feels tacked on

SCORE:

80 BUY



SUPER MONKEY BALL: BANANA BLITZ

One of the best party games on the GameCube comes to Wii. **Kosta Andreadis** investigates whether it's been a smooth transition or a real balls-up.

INFO

WII

GENRE: Puzzle Action/Party

DEVELOPER: Amusement
Vision/SEGA

RATING: G

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1-4 

IN BRIEF:

So there's this monkey, trapped in a ball. And you guide this monkey-ball — by tilting the world itself, not the ball — through a deadly maze to the mission's goal. Subtlety is the key; tilt too much and it's certain doom. Great in singeplayer, the SMB series

EXERT-O-METER

Singeplayer's tame, but once you hit the mini games — prepare to drip.



When *Super Monkey Ball* first made its debut on the GameCube a few years back, the simplistic and addictive nature of its gameplay won over gamers and critics alike. In no way a blockbuster along the lines of *Zelda* or *Mario*, *Super Monkey Ball* relied on its simple premise of tilting the game-world in order to guide monkeys, curiously trapped in balls, to the goal in a number of well designed maze and puzzle filled stages. A below par excursion in adventuring aside (we're shaking our fists at you, *Super Monkey Ball Adventure!*), the third instalment in the *Super Monkey Ball* series — dubbed *Banana Blitz* — is both a natural progression for the franchise and one that attempts to provide an almost limitless number of multiplayer games. Oh, and it just also happens to be one of the best examples of the Wii's unique new control scheme of all the launch titles.

OH, THE CRUELTY

The Wii-mote is a perfect fit for a game like *Super Monkey Ball*. Those who have already played one of the earlier *SMB* games would no doubt be able to hypothesise

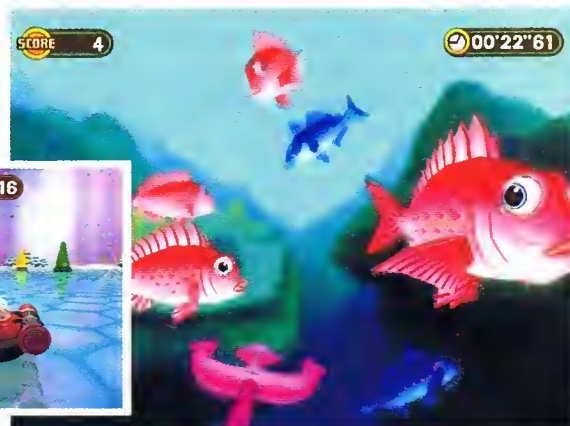
how it might all work. Actually, it's even simpler than you'd think: tilt the Wii-mote and the game world in *Banana Blitz* follows suit. It's simple, and doesn't take very long at all to get the hang of.

The Wiimote is the optimal control method for a game such as this, thanks in part to its pick up and play nature and the Wii itself providing an interesting challenge to developers to focus on new methods of gameplay and interaction. Consequently the main game found in *Banana Blitz* is arguably the best in the series so far: the new control scheme works wonderfully and the levels themselves sport design that shows an experienced development team in fine form and knowing what

does and doesn't work in *SMB*.

The difficulty ramps up quite nicely and although there's a story included here about a bad monkey stealing bananas from good monkeys, it's nothing like the lamentable *Super Monkey Ball Adventure*. You'll definitely keep playing to see what challenge the game throws at you next.

However *Super Monkey Ball* didn't make a name for itself just from its fun and challenging singleplayer game. The multiplayer portion of each title — a totally separate collection of addictive, competitive and laugh-inducing mini games — has always been





MONKEY SPORTS

Sure the Wii comes packed with the goodness of *Wii Sports* but *Banana Blitz* offers pretty much everything that Nintendo's own title does in addition to the other 250,000* or so mini games. Monkey Bowling is fantastic and lets you add spin to each bowl with ever so slight wrist movements. Monkey Golf has you swinging like Tiger Woods if he was a cute little monkey, and Monkey Boxing has you don the Wii-mote gloves for an old fashioned monkey fight!

*ever so slight exaggeration here
- there's only actually 50 of them.



“...some of the best Super Monkey Ball level design yet.”

exceptionally strong. Fans of the series are no strangers to long gaming bouts of Monkey Target, Bowling, Racing and Golfing, to this day. Cue Nintendo's new console, a system that has been built from the ground up as a social, fun experience for young and old. *Banana Blitz* obliges and comes packed with no less than 50 multiplayer party games that have you utilizing the controller (and sometimes nunchuk combo) in almost every conceivable way.

MONKEYS - IS THERE ANYTHING THEY CAN'T DO?

Many of the multiplayer mini games from previous *SMB* titles make a return in *BB*, and are a nice complement to the plenty of new ones on offer. The debut games range from simplistic challenge-based affairs (like Whack-a-Mole, which has each player hitting monkeys instead of moles) to fully fledged and surprisingly robust first-person shooting matches

(featuring monkeys instead, of course). In regards to quantity, there's literally so much on offer in *BB* that it would take at least a few hours just to go through each of the 50 mini games.

And there's some real quality too. There are, of course, a few duds (like the puzzle solving bore fest of Monkey Puzzle), but overall the ratio of good to bad party games is exceptionally high. The fantastic fishing, shooting, dancing, racing, and other 'ing'-based mini games make *Banana Blitz* the first must-have multiplayer game for the Wii.

Seriously, some of these games are just so good. For example, Monkey Racing has up to four players tilt their controllers sideways to steer their monkeys around *Mario Kart* style tracks, and Monkey Squash has players use the Wii-mote as their squash racquet and the analogue stick to move their character around to reach

the ball. As mentioned earlier, the first-person shooter styling of Monkey Battle works well and pretty much sells the premise of utilising the new control setup for a shooter better than other launch titles purporting to be of the genre. And it's just a mini game!

IT'S A GAS

If *Banana Blitz* was just the singleplayer game and a handful of extra party games thrown in then that probably would have been enough to secure 'must-play' status. This sequel, however,



goes a couple of steps further. The main singleplayer game benefits from Nintendo's new controller, and thanks to the experienced development team at Amusement Vision, some of the best *Super Monkey Ball* level-design yet. The huge collection of well thought out mini games also make good and intuitive use of the Wii's unique controller, and serve as a perfect sweat-drenched multiplayer complement to the main puzzle play.

VERDICT

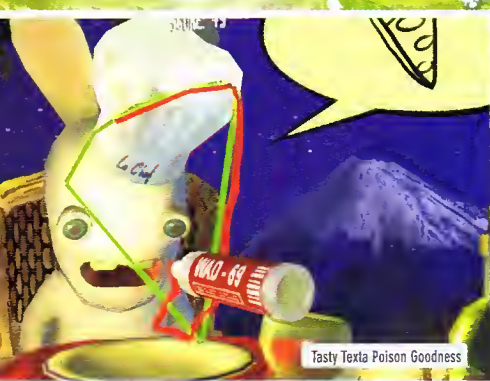
UP: Perfectly suited to Wiimote • Solid single-player missions • Multiplayer

DOWN: Story elements, why?? • The new soft pastel colours are a bit naff... • Some mini-games are duds.

SCORE:

82

BUY



Err... sure, whatever

RAYMAN RAVING RABBIDS

Gomes Chenbalin sucked at platformers anyway.

INFO

WII

GENRE: Party games

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft

RATING: PG

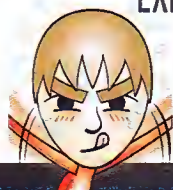
PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1-4

IN BRIEF:

Rayman — the limbless star of some of the finest 3D platformers around — returns in this collection of party mini-games. Clever use of the Wii's unique controls are required.

EXERT-O-METER



There's plenty of potential to go silly here, however there's plenty of gentle games if you're feeling taxed.

In Rayman's latest outing, our limbless hero is kidnapped by sociopathic bunnies and forced to compete in arena events to entertain a crowd, win his freedom and rescue those ugly little blue things he's always rescuing. Sounds like another day at work for the Frenchest of platform heroes but there's a catch; rather than being the platform adventure which has become synonymous with the series, *Rayman Raving Rabbids* is a collection of mini-games instead. Fifty in fact, played sequentially in singleplayer with more to be played in multiplayer.

The major problem with *Rayman Raving Rabbids* is the fact that only a handful of the mini-games are particularly well thought out. The majority of them may have looked good on paper but in practise they are something of an unpalatable mess. On the side of good you have mini games that have you kicking a bunny into a net, free kick style, starting by shaking the Wiimote and Nunchuk then hitting A at the right time and finally guiding the "ball" into the net (you use the Wiimote as a direct pointer here). Another clever mini-game sees the player using the Wiimote and Nunchuk as

bells to guide a blindfolded bunny into a series of obstacles to gain points before a 50000lb weight flattens the entire area. Probably the best implemented mini-games of them all are the on-rails shooter sections, usually seen as "boss" battles at the end of an arena round. Using the Wiimote as a direct pointer to shoot feels great, showing the definite potential of the Wii for FPS shooting action; shaking the Nunchuk to reload your gun feels perfectly natural too.

DANCE 'TIL YOU DROP

Unfortunately the clever mini-games of *Raving Rabbids* are in the

minority, with the overwhelming majority either seeing you performing exactly the same action over and over again or go on for far too long. The back of the box may proclaim loudly that *Rayman Raving Rabbids* has 75 mini-games but this is a little bit of an exaggeration; elevating difficulty levels of the same mini-game do not make for an entirely new game. In reality there are only 40 games, and the truth of the matter is that many of those 40 use exactly the same kind of control as each other, essentially making them





Funk-tastic!

“There’s only so many times you can point with the Wiimote and shake the Nunchuk before it gets a little tired...”



“Is he dead yet?”

simple re-skins of the same game — there’s only so many times you can point at things with the Wiimote and shake the Nunchuk before it gets a little tired.

So you’d probably think that the vast majority of mini-game collections have been designed primarily for multiplayer but bizarrely — even though it is obviously not the case — *Raving Rabbids* multiplayer sometimes feels as though it was a last minute addition. Don’t get us wrong — we think *Raving Rabbids* works well as a multiplayer party game, but it’s just not as polished as we thought it’d be.

With the exception of few games that take a split or shared screen approach, most of the mini-games simply have the players taking turns one after another to

get the high score. With some of the longer games this can lead to a little frustration. Even so, multiplayer is far and away the most fun you will have playing *Raving Rabbids*. Mini-games with a bunch of friends always seem to work, even if many of the mini games feel rather samey.

THOSE CRAZY RABBIDS

That said, *Rayman Raving Rabbids* still does have a hell of a lot of diversity, not necessarily through gameplay but through the look and humour of the game. Despite all the nagging qualities, it is quite funny in a bizarrely dark and surreal kind of way — like Jacques Tati meets Edward Gorey (*Er, who? – Ed.*). Although Rayman himself may be the iconic central character of the franchise, Ubisoft

RAVING RABBIDS?

The “story” behind *Rayman Raving Rabbids* is pretty straightforward. An army of nutty bunnies has invaded the land and now they’re everywhere. Furthermore, our limbless hero Rayman’s been captured to serve as entertainment by the long-eared masses.

And this gives *Rayman Raving Rabbids* its basic structure: thrown into the arena each morning, Rayman must complete three of four trials (mini-games) to take on the boss and proceed. Naturally, this is how you unlock new mini-games to play.



Ride ‘em, spiderboy!

have wisely set the focus firmly on the bunnies in *Rabbids*. Their incoherent screams, vacant stares and maniacal attacks with inappropriate objects are immediately funny and you’ll find yourself continuing to play the rather average single player game just to see what the furry little sadomasochists will be up to next. The game has an unexpectedly dark edge to it with often sombre (in a Tim Burton kind of way) art direction and character design. Once again, this just serves to make you want to see what is coming next.

Thankfully the developers have steered clear of voice acting for the most part, something that would most definitely detract from the bizarre charm of the game. The bunnies have some very amusing sound effects but sometimes — just like the mini-games — many of them go on for way too long. The first time you hear a bunny drowning in carrot juice is amusing, but after a minute and a half you’ll be wishing the little bastards would just get myxomatosis and die quietly. The dancing sections are also rendered more than a little annoying by the sped up chipmunk voice that sings all of the songs. Other than that, *Rayman Raving Rabbids* is a decent party game with some seriously cool style.



VERDICT

UP: Strangely funny • The bunnies • Some clever mini-games

DOWN: Repetition
Repetition
Repetition

SCORE:

80

BUY



"Cowabunga!"

TONY HAWK'S DOWNHILL JAM

Gomes Chenbalin certainly agrees something's going downhill...

INFO	WII
GENRE: Racing	
DEVELOPER: Toys for Bob	
RATING: G	
PRICE: \$99.95	
PLAYERS: 1-4	

IN BRIEF:

In videogames, Tony Hawk's name is synonymous with well-crafted skating adventures. Downhill Jam is a spin-off of the main series which drops the open-ended approach to skating and has players race down hills instead. Players pick an alter-ego, then take to killer inclines with tricks and speed.

EXERT-O-METER

You'll constantly be stretching forward to improve your aim and the sword fights are a work out.

Don't be fooled by the name into thinking that *Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam* is the Wii equivalent of *Project 8*. It's not. It's quite far from it in fact: aside from the presence of the Birdman and a bunch of recognizable tricks, *Downhill Jam* is really only part of the excellent *Tony Hawk* series of games in name only. Rather than freeform skating *Downhill Jam* is a racing game, pure and simple. First you choose a skater from a bunch of cartoony stereotypes — rich snob, stoner, goth chick, punk, faux Jamaican are selectable — then you hurtle down overly convoluted and slightly buggy tracks in races, slaloms, trick runs or to meet several other gimmicky objectives to reach the finish line first. Along the way you score progress points to unlock some new tracks and boards to play with.

ZONE BONE?

We'll start with the good aspects of *Downhill Jam* first. Control with the Wiimote, whilst a little sloppy, is intuitive and interesting. Holding the controller on the side with the D-pad under the left thumb (like a classic NES controller), the player steers their racer by tilting the controller to either side. The

motion sensitivity of the controller works fairly well but does come across a little unresponsive at times; some tracks will see you having to use exaggerated movements to make the same turns that you managed with small movements in the last.

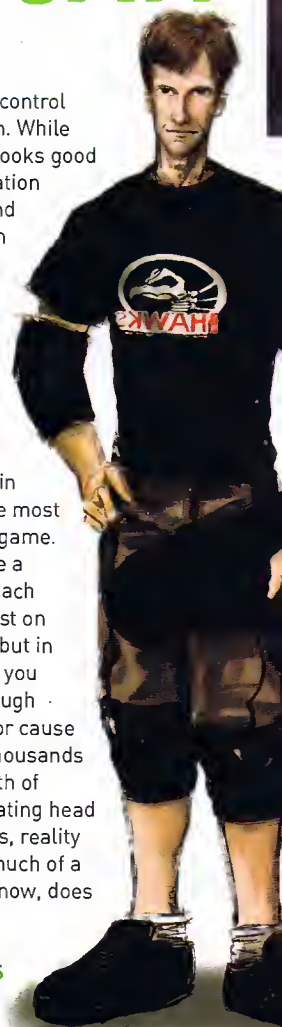
Doing tricks fills the player's special meter and boost meter, or "Zone Bone" as developer Toys for Bob so cleverly calls it. Once the Zone Bone is filled, the player can give the Wiimote a little shake to activate a speed boost. While good in theory, steering around a tight corner or quickly trying to avoid one of the numerous obstacles that appear to get in your way (a hint to future developers — cars coming around corners at random times and knocking you off your board isn't a whole lot of fun) can and will trigger the speed boost. Needless to say, this can be very frustrating.

One thing *Downhill Jam* does do successfully is give players a great sense of speed. Characters practically scream along on some of the steeper courses. Toys For Bob have even implemented a "death wobble" if you go too fast, where the skateboard begins to rock uncontrollably if you exceed your speed limit, causing the

player to lose control and slow down. While this certainly looks good from an animation perspective and helps heighten the sense of speed even further, you really have to question the decision to penalise players for going too fast in what is, for the most part, a racing game. Sure, it may be a realistic approach to going too fast on a skateboard, but in a game where you can skate through Machu Pichu or cause hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of damage by skating head first into things, reality doesn't hold much of a rightful place now, does it?

DOIN' TRICKS

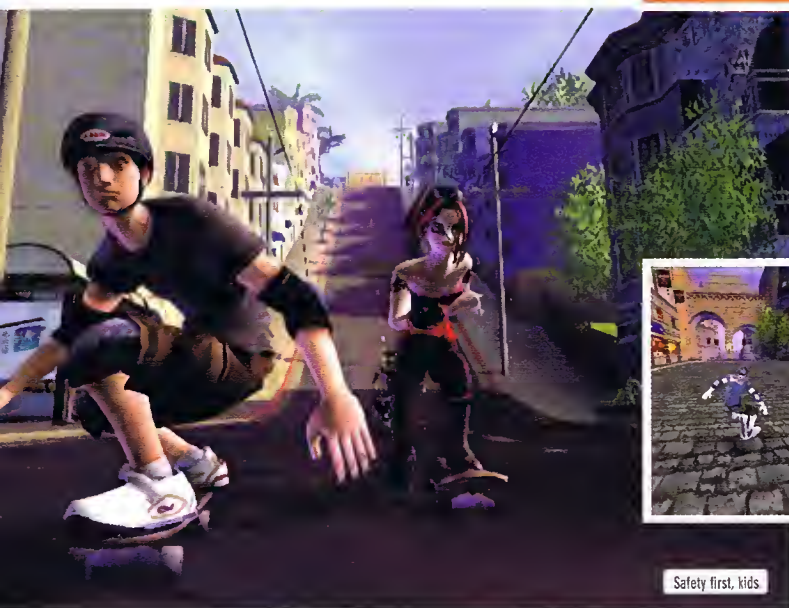
Having only three face





KEEP IT CLEAN

Tony Hawk's *Downhill Jam*'s multiplayer component isn't just about pure racing. No, you'll also have to push and shove your fellow racers. Hitting either the '1' button or either left or right on the direction pad, players can knock competing skaters to the ground. This is particularly important in the 'Steal the Head' multiplayer game. Here, the person who has the head for longest wins; the only way to steal it is to get slap happy!



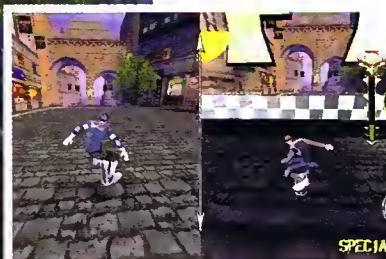
buttons and a D-pad on the Wii remote, the trick control scheme for *Downhill Jam* is quite radically different from any previous *Tony Hawk* game. Holding down the '2' button causes the character to crouch for extra speed and releasing it causes the character to ollie. This may sound similar to classic *Hawk* control, but the '2' button is also used for grab tricks while in the air. This over simplification can lead to some problems if you're a veteran *Tony Hawk* player; you need to wait until you land a trick before hitting crouch or you will bust out a grab trick and land

badly, or sometimes even bail.

Meanwhile the '1' button handles grinding and flip tricks. When the Zone Bone meter is full, hitting A and either of the face buttons executes a special trick for big points. *Downhill Jam* makes it very, very difficult to mess up a trick so you can easily find yourself just randomly punching buttons to up your trick multiplier. It all just feels a bit cheap.

Level design, on the other hand, is vexingly both clever and unnecessarily convoluted. Tracks are fast and full of grinds, jumps and trick spots to raise your Zone Bone. Each level also has various

“Downhill Jam is a racing game, pure and simple..”



shortcuts, switchbacks and alternate paths to speed up your time and add to your frustration; there are numerous “dead zones” (for want of a better word): near blind spots that the player can get stuck in, not only losing them valuable time but valuable hair as well, as they pull it out in frustration. Although it is very difficult to bail from a trick, the level design of *Downhill Jam* will often put your character on their arse thanks to blind corners, random traffic and even more random obstacles. You may be able to land in the middle of a flip trick but find yourself crashing into a car, wall, bollard or other obstacles. Never fear though — although *Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam* punishes the player for going fast, taking corners and trying to access hidden routes, it rewards you in other areas — multiple times during play we fell off the edge of Machu Pichu, only to be re-spawned at the head of the pack, making for an easy win.

Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam isn't particularly bad, and multiplayer racing certainly adds to the fun factor of the game. It's just that overall, *Downhill Jam* just isn't very good either.



VERDICT

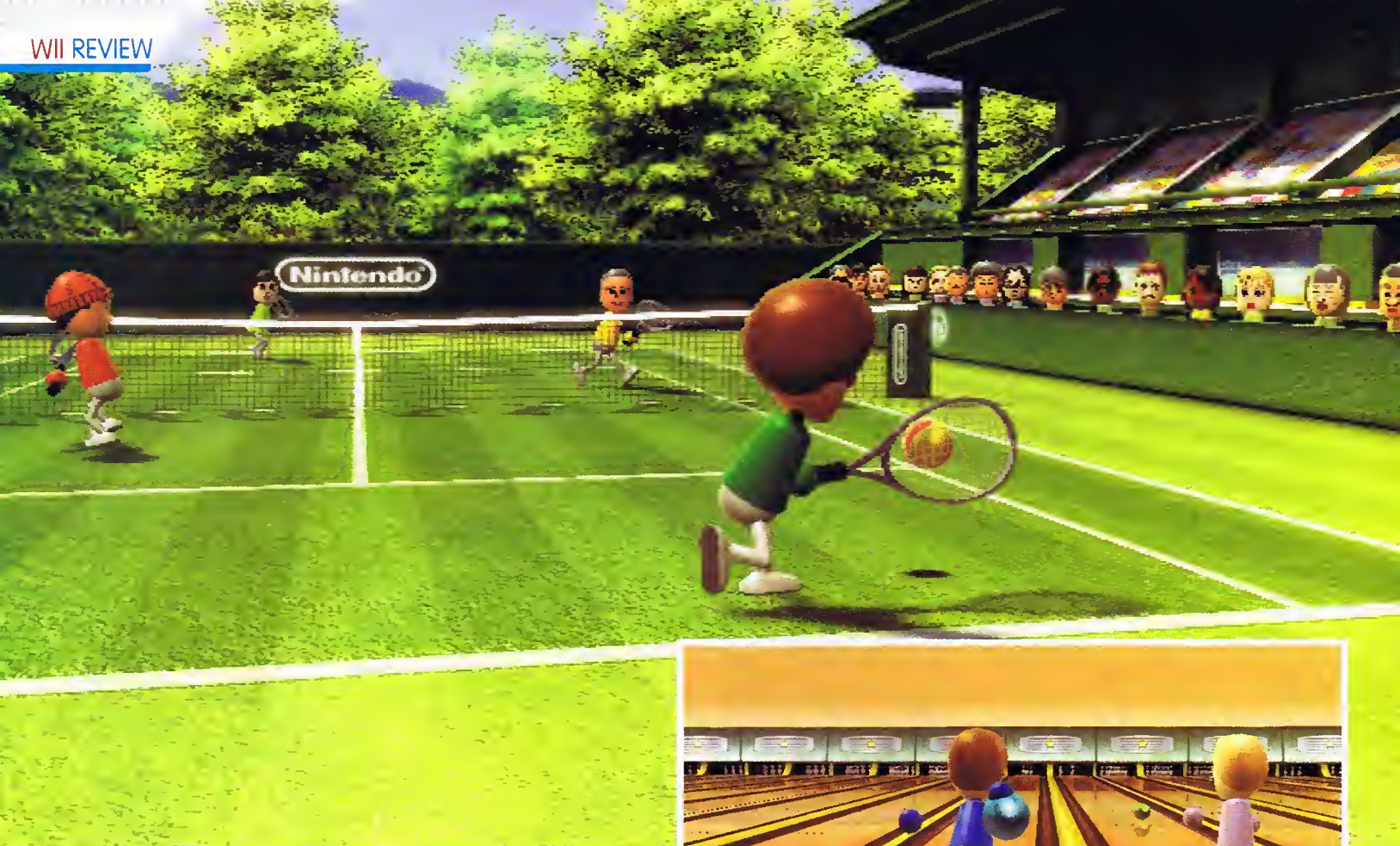
UP: Sense of speed • Control • Sometimes clever character intros

DOWN: Punishes the player • Dead Zones • Controls way too oversimplified

SCORE:

62 TRY





WII SPORTS

Dan Staines is *this* close to getting a 300 game...

INFO

WII

GENRE: Party/Sports

DEVELOPER: Nintendo

RATING: G

PRICE: N/A

PLAYERS: 1-4

IN BRIEF:

Bundled with the Wii console, *Wii Sports* is a party game containing five individual sports-style minigames: bowling, boxing, baseball, tennis, and golf. As the game that introduces most people to the Wii, it is currently the console's flagship title.

EXERT-O-METER

You don't NEED to put much effort in, but you will because it's fun.

The reason we're reviewing *Wii Sports* – a game that comes free with every Wii sold in this country – is simple: some people don't own a Wii. If that's you, then the purpose of this review is to let you know how much value *Wii Sports* represents as part of the Wii console bundle. And even if you do own a Wii (and consequently, *Wii Sports*), then you can still view this review as a kind of measuring-stick for the rest of our reviews. What I mean by that is, because this is a review of a game you've already played, you can use it as a way of judging the severity of Nintendo Gamer's scoring system. Make sense? Okay, good. Then let's move onto the game itself.

GST THIS, YOU UGLY GNOME!

So let's start with the best sport first – bowling. There are two main reasons bowling works so

well in *Wii Sports*. The first is that it's a sport everybody instinctively understands how to play. You have your ball, you roll it down the alley, and you hit the pins. This simplicity makes *Wii-bowling* extraordinarily accessible, which in turn makes it relatively easy to set up a good multiplayer game. The second reason that bowling works is its control scheme. Unlike some of the other sports, the way you bowl in *Wii-bowling* is very similar to the way you bowl in real bowling. As such, there's a level of skill – and satisfaction – that simply isn't present in most other videogames. You feel GOOD when you get a strike in *Wii-bowling*. Like you've

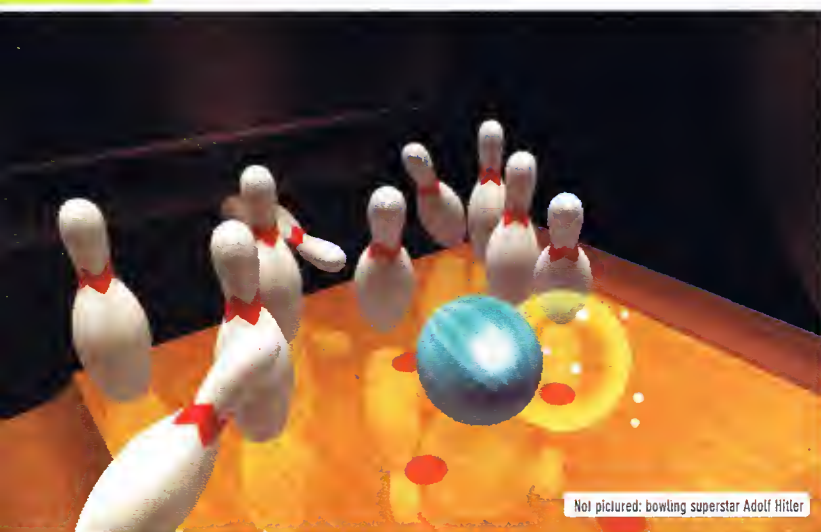
accomplished something.

Boxing, on the other hand, elicits a different kind of satisfaction. Foregoing any pretence to accurate simulation, the enjoyment it provides is much more primal and visceral. Basically, it's fun because it lets you punch the crap out of a pretend Hitler – and because it's a consequence-free way of indulging your aggressive instincts. It doesn't matter that the controller rarely registers your punches properly or that most AI opponents can be beaten using the same one-two combo. It's still fun to play. It's still enjoyable to swing your arms around like a crazy person until John Howard (or whichever Mii you





“Bowling and boxing alone make it a great party game...”



Not pictured: bowling superstar Adolf Hitler

made specifically for punching) crumples to the floor in a twisted heap. Cheap thrills? Certainly. But cheap thrills are thrills all the same – and why would you want anything more from a party game?

STALIN IS AN AWESOME PITCHER

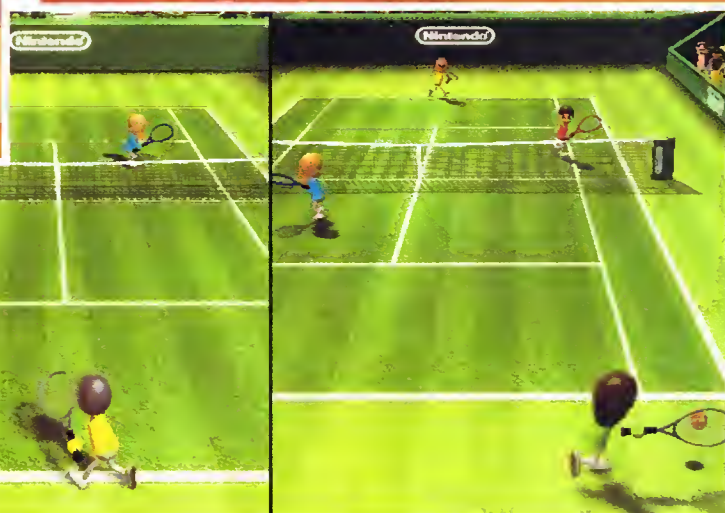
Although fun to play for an hour or so, the *Wii Sports* rendition of baseball suffers from an unusual difficulty curve that sadly renders it uninteresting in the long term. The problem is that it's simply too easy to master. Once you adjust to the weird perceptual disjunct that comes from swinging at a ball on the television, hitting a home run becomes an almost pedestrian process devoid of any real effort. The same goes for pitching, where the twitchy controls make it possible to blast out a 150KM fast-ball with a mere flick of the wrist. It's clear that Nintendo has simplified the mechanics of the sport in an attempt to make it more accessible, and that's commendable, but we can't help but feel that it's been made TOO easy. There's no satisfaction in it.

And so it is with golf too, although for very different reasons. With its ultra-sensitive controls and merciless course design, golf is by far the least approachable of all the *Wii Sports*. We've been playing for over a month now and still we find it difficult to judge the strength of a swing. Sometimes it's almost like the game is mocking us: try to swing it softly and the ball rockets off into the upper atmosphere; try to swing with a bit of power and it barely makes it off the tee. You'd think there'd be some sort of happy in-between, but if there is, we couldn't find it. And certainly not for want of trying.

Finally, we come to tennis. As it turns out, I just finished a game of *Wii-tennis* with Malky from *Hyper*, and it served (ho ho!) to highlight many of its inadequacies – the most significant of which is the distinct feeling of powerlessness

you get while playing it. Because your on-court avatars run around according to their own mysterious volition, you never really feel in control of the game. The racquet-swinging mechanics are fine, but tennis isn't just about hitting the ball – it's also about positioning. By taking movement away from the player and placing it under the control of the computer, Nintendo has effectively robbed the game of its strategy, and thus much of its appeal.

But listen: even though tennis, golf, and baseball aren't that great, there's still no denying that *Wii Sports* is a lot of fun. Bowling and boxing alone make it a great party



game, and the rest of the sports – though flawed – at least provide a glimpse of what the *Wii* is capable of. I don't know if you'd want to pay money for it, but it's definitely an excellent freebie.

VERDICT

UP: Bowling • Boxing • Baseball (for an hour)

DOWN: Baseball (after an hour) • Golf • Tennis

SCORE:

78



CALL OF DUTY 3

March Stepanik enters battle with an entirely different set of controls.



INFO

WII

GENRE: First person shooter

DEVELOPER: Treyarch

RATING: MA15+

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1

IN BRIEF:

"Soldier, listen up! This is war! Take that gun and point it at...no, not at me, imbecile! At Nazis, soldier! This is the second great war and those maniacal krauts are decimating France. It's up to us now, maggot. Now move it, double time!"

EXERT-O-METER

Aside from the occasional frantic rowing sections, *CoD3* is all about fine control.



To convince you that you're actually there: that's one of the grand aims of the *Call of Duty* series. To help create the illusion of being a soldier plunked in the middle of the utter chaos that was World War 2, the *CoD* series presents gamers with a finicky attention to graphical detail (wow, check out those smoke effects!), real-world level design and an audio score which seems to exist only to bludgeon you into submission with its relentless snipes and booming explosions. A *Call of Duty* game is intense, if nothing else.

POINT AND SHOOT

And now with *Call of Duty 3* on the next generation of consoles — which are mostly here and now except for one obviously tardy contender — the series branches off and treads down two distinctly different paths towards trying to achieve the same sobering illusion (it should be pointed out that on all major console formats, content-wise, *CoD3* is the exact same game). *CoD3* on the Xbox 360 (and soon, PS3) on the one hand adds a new layer of detail and realism to the visuals, bringing high-definition to the war-weary senses.

The Wii, on the other hand, forgoes the visual fidelity and instead goes for a more visceral experience. This is the 'revolution'

Nintendo was talking about when it code-named the Wii. See, the Wii Remote actually becomes your gun in *CoD3* in a way a more traditional controller never could. Pointing at the screen with it, players fire with B trigger on the under side of the remote, using the motion sensing capabilities to move an on screen cursor around the game world. This is the most literal translation of point and shoot, and it's fantastic. What *CoD3* on Wii lacks in the visual department is more than made up for with the sense of immersion the new controls offer.

Of course, you'll need to invest some time getting the hang of these controls first. The learning curve is steep; moving the cursor to any edge of the screen moves the camera in that direction (movement is handled via the Nunchuk) and finding that sweet spot between aiming your gun and moving the perspective is initially quite a challenge. Strolling into a fire fight with your head inadvertently in the clouds doesn't actually work too well. Trust us.

However once you get the hang of it, the control scheme is most rewarding — even if you have to put up with some silly rowing manoeuvres in various scripted moments (like fending off a Nazi soldier who has grappled you). Thankfully, these sequences are

few and far between.

WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

With the game's mechanics out of the way, what about the actual content of the game? *CoD3* is a solid WW2-based firstperson shooter. It's one big scripted rollercoaster ride from start to finish. Sure, *CoD3* doesn't allow you to stray from its clear and concise path, but it does reward you with a gripping and intense war story.

The most disappointing thing about *Call of Duty 3* is the lack of play modes on offer. There's nothing in *CoD3* on the Wii except for the singleplayer campaign. In a series whose strength has been multiplayer, on a system that encourages people to play together, the omission of multiplayer is frankly a bit of a slap in the face.

VERDICT

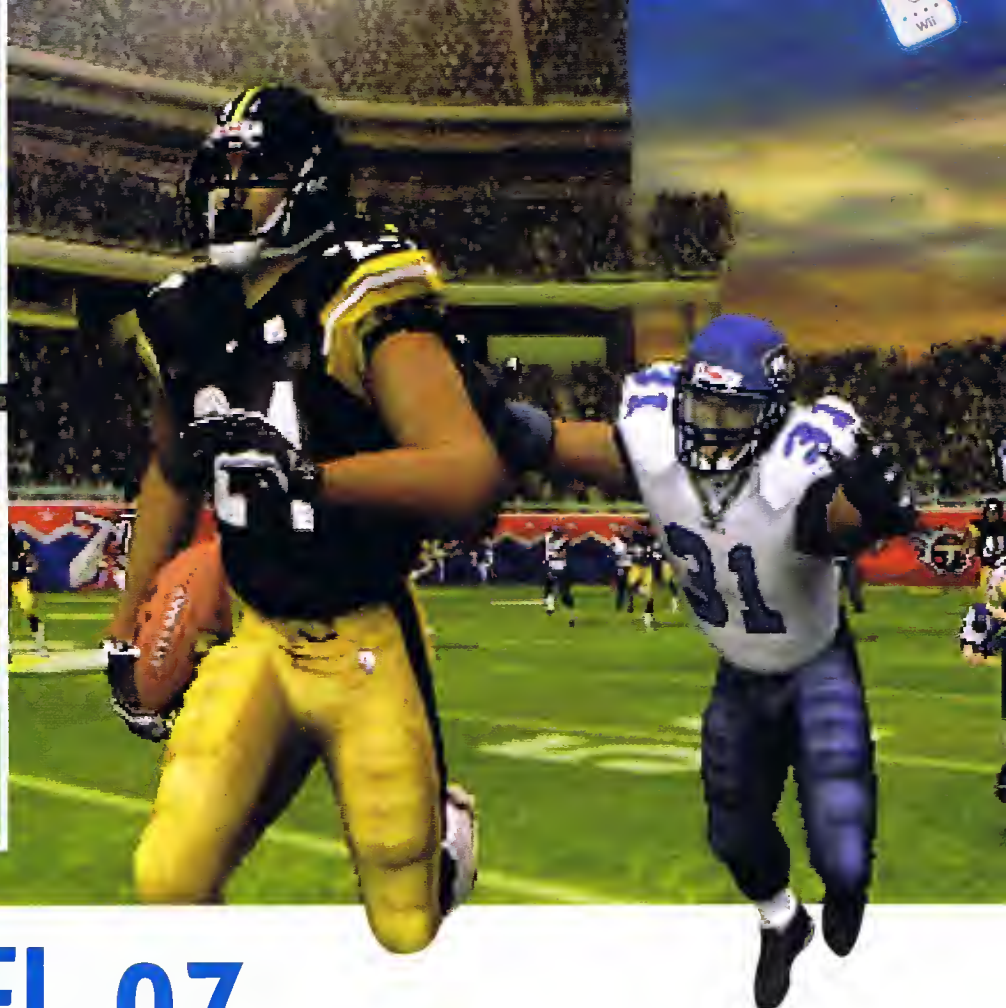
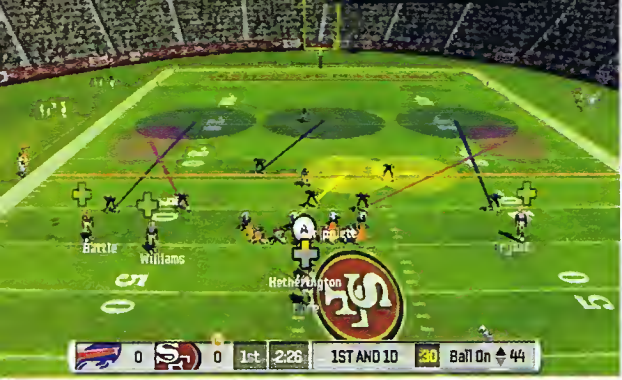
UP: Point and shoot controls • Overall presentation • Nice level design

DOWN: Linear progression • Some control sequences • No multiplayer??

SCORE:

74

TRY



MADDEN NFL 07

The Madden series gets its first real breath of fresh air in years. **March Stepanik** likes what he plays...

INFO

Wii

GENRE: Sports

DEVELOPER: EA

RATING: G

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1-4

IN BRIEF:

The best selling sports game franchise in the US, Madden on Wii lets gamers play American Football like never before. Gamers control the game using the Wii remote to simulate real life actions. For example, to pass the ball, the Wii remote is gestured forward like a real football pass.

EXERT-O-METER

General play is light; multiplayer can be frantic.



Okay, okay. Let's get the whole "my football code is better than your football code" argument out of the way first. If you can get past the army of 50-plus men per team dressed in pads and tights, the slightly confusing rule book and the stop-start nature of the game, American Football (or gridiron as it's otherwise known) is actually a rather deep and satisfying code of football. Granted, there's a lot to get your head around at first, but once you do there exists a game that's great to watch and even better to play — especially as a videogame. And anyway, can't all the codes just get along?

The yearly Madden series of gridiron videogames is over fifteen years strong now, and each year EA has delivered gamers an evolution of graphics and improved game modes to play with. With full NFL support, the Madden series has embarked on a steady march towards realism with some pretty stunning results.

READY...

Then along comes the Wii version, which has managed in one sweeping motion-based gesture to inject the series with the most innovation seen since its inception. To snap the ball, pull the Wii remote towards you. To pass the ball, mimic a real football pass. Most

in-game movements are based on real word motions, meaning you feel a physical connection with the game like you never have before. In a word, the way you experience Madden and American Football on the Wii is brilliant.

Let's take it further. The running game has you controlling your fullback with the Nunchuk's thumbstick. Want to stiff-arm a defender? Easy, just thrust the Wii remote out to the side like you would in real life. Not all movements are quite as satisfying, though. Take Juking (a sudden side-step to avoid defenders) — you do so by thrusting the Nunchuk to the side as you would with the performing a stiff-arm, something which isn't quite so immersive.

Then you've got kicking. Of all the various control experiences EA has brought to football care of the Wii, kicking is by far and away the worst. To kick you aim with the Nunchuk's thumbstick, then from a hip-level position you swing the remote out to give the kick its power and accuracy. Give it too much gusto and you end up in slice territory (sorta like Wii Sports' Golf), which is something which is quite easy to do. Thankfully, kicking is the only example of the new motion-based controls going wrong; overall, Madden is a tight game which

strongly benefits from the Wii's control system.

SET..

As for the game of football itself, Madden mostly succeeds. All the important game modes are in (superstar mode and franchise mode being essentials in the series), and there's even some new four-player mini games made specifically for the Wii controls which are a real gas to play. The only real complaint is the horrible collision detection in this version. Players often walk through their teammates, making for some really off-putting visuals. But since this doesn't affect play at all, we can live with it. And it's certainly worth forgiving as overall, Madden NFL 07 is the most enjoyable version of Gridiron we've played.

VERDICT

UP: Great use of the Wii remote • Strong game modes • Fun party games

DOWN: Shoddy collision detection • Kicking method stinks • Twitchy controls in some games

SCORE:

82

BUY



MARVEL ULTIMATE ALLIANCE

March Stepnik loves a good dungeon crawl.

INFO

WII

GENRE: Action RPG

DEVELOPER: Vicarious Visions/
Raven

RATING: M

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1-4



IN BRIEF:

140 Marvel heroes. An army led by Dr. Doom. Thousands of henchmen to exchange some fisticuffs with. Frantic action play consisting of a team of Marvel's most loved super heroes. This is *Ultimate Alliance*.

EXERT-O-METER

Ignoring the A button, *Ultimate Alliance* will give you Wii-Remote arm of steel.

Forget the robotic henchmen and flying fortresses in the sky. Turn a blind eye to the corporate HQ and the sleek modes of transportation. Because for all of *Marvel Ultimate Alliance*'s contemporary modern presentation, at its heart lies an old-school dungeon-crawl hack 'n' slash of a game. Instead of orcs and dragons, though, you get a who's who list of Marvel villains. And instead of mammoth sword-wielding warriors and mages casting magic missile, you've got Marvel's A-List of super heroes. Hell, you start with Captain America, Thor, Spider-Man and Wolverine in your team. How cool is that?

OH, THE CRUELTY

Obviously the main drawcard of *MUA* is the 140-plus cast of Marvel superheroes – the good, bad and the freakishly mutant ugly. Granted, you can play only as 20 of them, but even then it's nice to see so many superheroes in one small space.

And why are you here? Dr Doom and the Masters of Evil are in town making trouble. And you, under the guidance of Colonel Nick Fury, are obviously here to put a stop to their evil plans. I mean, c'mon. A guy named Dr. Doom isn't going to be going door to door to sell biscuits now, is he?

With your 20-strong gang of superheroes (of which you'll have to steadily unlock some for use), the action has a surprising amount of spice in it. While the main brawling controls are generic and across the board, there's a surprising amount of originality care of the unique abilities of each hero. For example, Thor has his hammer attacks, Captain America can throw his shield and Spider-Man can web sling – his enemies as well at the (invisible) ceiling for a bit of Spidey-swinging.

Further enhancing the rather mash-tastic gameplay is the levelling-up characters do. You see, this is an action RPG, meaning as you play your characters increase in power and gain abilities, which is a nice incentive to keep on mashing those buttons.

EXHAUSTING

That is if you choose to mash buttons in the first place. Most of the attack commands in *UA* (and there are many) are gesture based. Nice idea in theory, a little bit optimistic in practice. Given that gameplay mainly consists of hitting your enemies as hard and as fast as possible, relying solely on gestures is a sure fire away to get the sweat flowing freely. Forget the fitness mode in *Wii Sports* – *UA* features the most intense workout

of any of the Wii launch titles. Thankfully, the main mash-button – the Wii Remote's 'A' – is all you really need to get through the bulk of play. And it's easier on the old ticker, that's for sure.

The other nice thing about *Ultimate Alliance* is the multiplayer modes on offer. Given there's four heroes on screen in your party (in singelplayer you can swap between each at will), multiplayer is perfectly setup. Simply substitute the computer controlled characters with real players and you've got a great four-player co-operative game of *Ultimate Alliance*. There's even a competitive mode for those are a tad less altruistic.

Marvel Ultimate Alliance isn't a revelation of a game. Instead it's a solid action brawler which will put a smile on the faces of Marvel enthusiasts. For everyone else, it's not half bad either.

VERDICT

UP: Mash-tastic fun • Marvel fan service
• Great co-op mode

DOWN: A little too bland? • Hammy story scenes

SCORE:

80

BUY



Wii PLAY

March Stepnik wonders whether this one should have been called *Wii Played*.

INFO

Wii

GENRE: Party/Mini Games

DEVELOPER: Nintendo

RATING: G

PRICE: \$79.95

PLAYERS: 1-2

IN BRIEF:

Wii Play is Nintendo doing what it does best: serving up a collection of mini games (or party games) for us to play. This time, the theme is the new Wii Remote – in particular, learning how to use the new controller.

EXERT-O-METER

Needing fine movements, *Wii Play* is a breeze.



There's one crucial caveat to *Wii Play* which is so important that I'm going to get out in the open right from at very beginning of this review. *Wii Play*, you see, is as cheap as chips. Granted, it might be a few big bags of chips, but chips nonetheless.

Ten bucks. You get a collection of nine Wii Remote motion based mini-games for what has surely got to be the cheapest standard price console title around. Even if you're only interested in but one of the games included, that's some pretty good value on offer, right?

Well, there's actually one condition of entry for this ride. You'll need to cough up the full price of a Wii Remote controller as well. See, *Wii Play* is actually a bundle consisting of the game and one Wii Remote (but no nunchuck). With stand-alone Wii Remotes selling for \$69.95, the extra ten bucks for *Wii Play* isn't a bad way to come across several new party games as you acquire that essential and inevitable second controller. Not a bad way at all.

ONE BIG TUTORIAL

So *Wii Play* is a collection of nine games bound together to form an instructive whole. The idea behind

Wii Play – besides having fun, of course – is that starting with the first game of target shooting (otherwise affectionately known as Duck Hunt 2006 for all you NES fans out there) and playing the rest in sequential order to the final game of Tanks! teaches the player the ins and outs of the Wii Remote. Each mini game introduces subtle new control requirements over the previous one, building on each until you're a supposed Elite Wii Remote expert.

As far as specific games go, here's what you get in *Wii Play*: Shooting Range, Find Mii, Pose Mii, Table Tennis, Laser Hockey, Billiards, Fishing, Charge! and Tanks! As you'd expect, there are some real hits and misses in this collection. Table Tennis, Laser Hockey, Billiards and even Shooting Range you'll probably go back to, while Find Mii (a Where's Wally style affair), Pose Mii (fit the right shaped Mii in the appropriate hole), Fishing (self explanatory), Charge! (a cow racing game) and Tanks! (a simple move and shoot style game) you'll more than likely ignore.

One important thing to be aware of with *Wii Play* is that it's really almost the polar opposite of *Wii*

Sports. While *Sports* invites more accurate, broad sweeping gestures to control the game with, *Wii Play* is essentially all about very subtle movements. Case in point is Table Tennis: you're moving a paddle in a small area on screen, not swinging the remote like you would playing the real thing. Those looking for more *Wii Sports* style experiences won't find them in *Wii Play*.

If you take *Wii Play* as a decent collection of mini games for casual play (namely Table Tennis, Laser Hockey and Billiards), then it's a pretty good proposition for \$10.00. However with a serious lack of options, limited multiplayer and questionable longevity, know that you're only getting your money's worth.

VERDICT

UP: Some decent mini games included • Mii compatibility • OMG, the price!

DOWN: Some trashy mini games included • Poor longevity • Twitchy controls in some games

SCORE:

80

BUY

Need for Speed Carbon

INFO

GENRE: Racing

DEVELOPER: EA

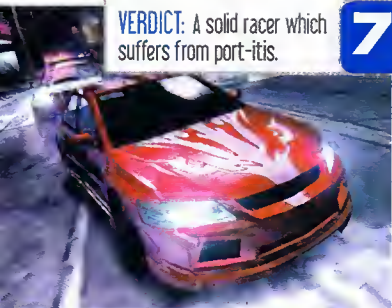
RATING: PG

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1- Multi

VERDICT: A solid racer which suffers from port-itis.

78



Need for Speed's yearly update is upon us again, except this time it's on Wii. So what's new? Control-wise, a whole lot. Adopting the standard approach to racing games on Wii (titling the Wii Remote to the side, and using it steer in a realistic fashion), we can say that the new system works quite well. You can even steer with the Nunchuk's thumbstick if you prefer it old-school style.

Trouble is, the game feels a tad unpolished. It's basically a GameCube port and suffers from a whole lot of slowdown in parts.

And *Carbon* sits doesn't sit as high in our books as last year's *Most Wanted* or even the *Underground* pair of *NFS* games. There are some neat new additions to play with (like companion racers which you can command) and a more detailed car customisation system, but the racing itself is just a bit too easy.

Gomes Chenbalin

Gottlieb Pinball Classics

INFO

GENRE: Pinball Sim

DEVELOPER: FarSight Studios

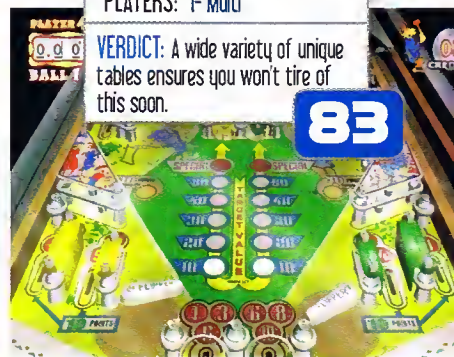
RATING: G

PRICE: \$79.95

PLAYERS: 1- Multi

VERDICT: A wide variety of unique tables ensures you won't tire of this soon.

83



Featuring replicas of eleven actual Gottlieb tables, GPC doubles as both historical curio and faithful simulator. Left and right flipper commands are assigned to the Nunchuk and Wiimote triggers respectively; and whilst shunting the controllers to the side only produces a canned animation for nudging the table, it is after all timing, not force, that's going to save your ball.

The recreation is further enhanced by sleek designs and MIDI theme tunes, along with the "arcade" background noise which adds to the immersion. Tutorials informing you of the key objectives of each table are thoroughly welcomed, though the strongest point remains the sheer individuality of the machines themselves.

Anthony Corbett

SpongeBob Square Pants: CREATURE FROM THE KRUSTY KRAB

SpongeBob is one hell of a weird cartoon and *Creature from the Krusty Krab*, takes this weirdness to a new high. It's an underwater trip that delves into the twisted dreams of SpongeBob and his best mate Patrick. This is an old-school platformer that uses the Wii Remote and Nunchuk to good effect. The analogue stick moves the characters around and the various buttons are used for actions like jumping (A or AA) and attacks (C & Z). Additionally, more powerful attacks can be used by snapping down the Nunchuk (lunge) or the Wii Remote while the character is mid-air (piledriver). Racing, flying and skydiving sections help vary the action and different visual styles are used for each of the wacky dream sequence levels, keeping things rather interesting. Surprisingly fun.

Anthony Hetrih

INFO

GENRE: Action / Adventure

DEVELOPER: Blitz Games

RATING: G

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1

VERDICT: Spongy delivers a bizarre platform adventure that kids and fan-boys should get a kick out of.

73



Happy Feet

The great irony of *Happy Feet* is that while there's a *Dance-Dance Revolution*-style game in here (you know the one where you stomp your feet on a mat in time to direction arrows on the screen?), the control method has nothing to do with your feet at all. Maybe that's why your feet are happy?

Instead, you meet the arrow directions with flicks of the wrist in the appropriate direction. Joining this game are two other styles of play; the 3D swimming adventures and belly-slide racing on icy downhill tracks. As you progress, each style of game becomes more challenging.

Given the basic nature of the games on offer, this is clearly aimed at the VERY young end of the movie's intended audience. Production values are high (most actors voice the game); challenge is particularly light.

Gomes Chenbalin

INFO

GENRE: Mini-games

DEVELOPER: Midway

RATING: G

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1-2

VERDICT: Kids will love this

65



Monster 4x4 World Circuit



INFO

GENRE: Racing

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft

RATING: G

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1-4

VERDICT: Don't fall asleep at the wheel.

61

Monster 4x4 World Circuit offers mediocre racing, plain and simple. Oh, it doesn't do anything particularly offensive – like, I dunno, not register left steer commands or anything – but it does nothing to fuel the imagination either.

All the expected elements are there: a selection of wacky and larger than life vehicles to race in, jump-laden courses and obstacles like oil slicks to spice things up. Racing with the Wii Remote is easy enough, and the packed-in steering-wheel shaped cradle for the Wii Remote works fine (although it verges on being unnecessary).

There's even four player racing, which is, as expected, the best way to experience *World Circuit*. Just don't expect a *Mario Kart* killer.

Gomes Chenbalin

Barnyard

This home-grown Aussie effort proves that life out on the farm can be a whole lot of fun. It's also a good way to work up a sweat. Based on the moo-vie (*Groan... - Ed.*) of the same name, this is a free roaming adventure where you play a milk-squirting, man-cow who's ready to party. It's a solid effort by developer Blue Tongue, with the main story mode using the Wii Remote and Nunchuck combo for character control. However, it's the unlockable mini-games where the Wii's controls prove the most fun, with activities ranging from pool, darts and golf to a frantic wack-a-mole styled game. While *Barnyard*'s been designed with younger gamers in mind, the mini-games are hard to put down regardless of your age.

Anthony Hetrih

INFO

GENRE: Action / Adventure

DEVELOPER: Blue Tongue

RATING: G

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1-4

VERDICT: *Barnyard* brings home the bacon with a great selection of Wii-centric mini-games that even adults can enjoy!

72



Super Fruitfall

Super Fruitfall is quite removed from typical puzzle games. It actually has more in common with the "logic challenges" that sit alongside *D&D* supplements in geek stores, since each of its fifty puzzles have a finite number of solutions. Constantly flipping the playing field to align fruit into groups of three or more, its replay value comes from your attempts to reach these solutions in as few moves and the quickest time possible. Multi-player mode will arguably be the biggest drawcard here, with the two players' puzzles located on screen together as you attempt to clear the stages concurrently.

The ability to rotate the screen with a simple flick of the wrist is also a neat inclusion.

Anthony Corbett

INFO

GENRE: Puzzle

DEVELOPER: Sytem 3

RATING: G

PRICE: \$79.95

PLAYERS: 1- Multi

VERDICT: A nice diversion, but the Wii's already bursting with nicer diversions than this.

70



Open Season

This one's a port of the GameCube edition of the game, meaning everything's the same save for the addition of motion-based controls. Other than that, nothing.

Not a graphical update, not any extra content. Just, hey – wait for it – a steeper price the original GameCube version. For 25 singleplayer missions of mediocrity and a handful of passable multiplayer games, this just doesn't feel right.

Wii controls aside, there's absolutely no reason to recommend this version of *Open Season* over the GameCube one. The GameCube version you can play on the Wii, and it's cheaper to boot. If you just have to try the Wii-ified controls and have money to burn, *Open Season* still remains a passable movie tie-in.

Gomes Chenbalin

INFO

GENRE: Action adventure

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft

RATING: G

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1-4

VERDICT: A weak GameCube port

50



GT Pro Series

INFO

GENRE: Racing

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft

RATING: G

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1-2

VERDICT: Can Mario Kart come soon enough?

52



The one cool thing about this racer is that you've got real licensed cars in here, meaning Hondas look like Hondas, Subarus look like Subarus, and Nissans look like Nissans.

It's a shame then, that everything else about this game is just so weak. The visuals are particularly ugly. The sound effects? Hey, we've heard stronger stuff emerge from the DS' tiny speakers.

The racing itself is pretty damn solid and the tracks are fine except for the fact there's just too few. The included steering wheel cradle for the Wii Remote is a nice gesture, but it doesn't make up for the fact that as a racer, *GT Pro Series* is a hard one to recommend.

Gomes Chenbalin

Cars

INFO

GENRE: Racing Adventure

DEVELOPER: Rainbow Studios

RATING: G

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1-2

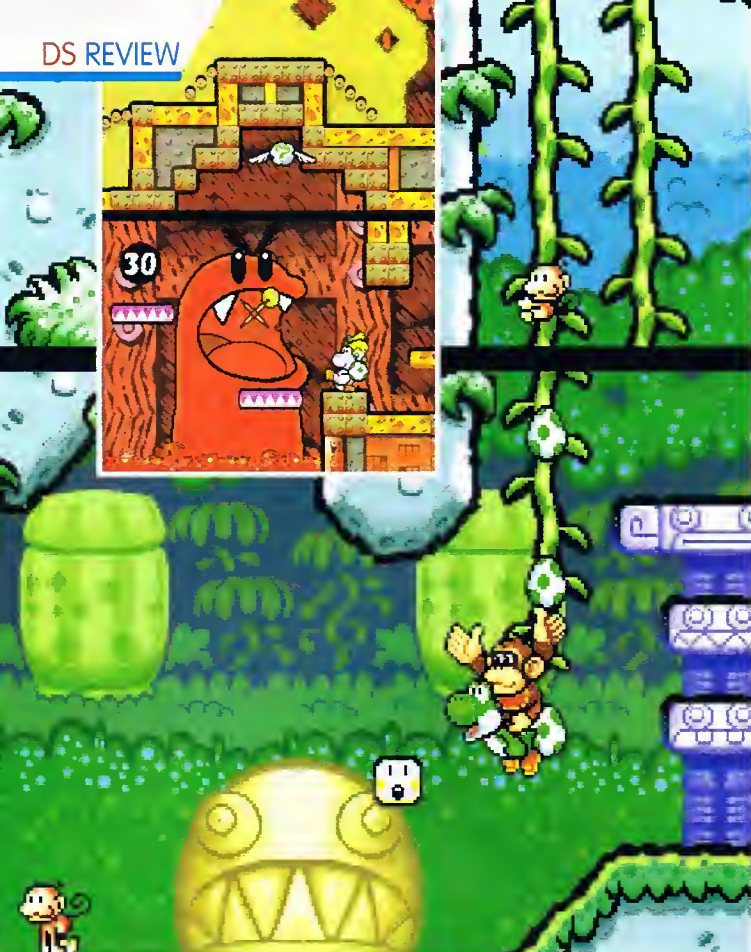
VERDICT: Great for kids, but petrol heads need not apply!

72



Being a port of the *Cars* videogame released last year, I was surprised to find that there was still some fun to be had with the Wii version of the game. While it doesn't add anything as far as content, the visuals have been given a bit of a polish and the new controls work pretty well. Holding the Wii Remote horizontally, players tilt left and right to steer, press "A" to accelerate and the "2" button to brake. Special moves like power-slides are pulled-off using the D-Pad and there's also a tilt move that pops you up on two wheels. You can even jump over opponents by jerking the controller upward. Overall, *Cars* has a loose arcade style that's perfectly suited to younger gamers.

Anthony Hetrih



YOSHI'S ISLAND DS

How do you follow-up perfection? **March Stepnik** finds out.



INFO

DS

GENRE: Platform

DEVELOPER: Artoon

RATING: G

PRICE: \$69.95

PLAYERS: 1



IN BRIEF:

Yoshi's Island DS is a sequel to the fondly remembered *Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island* released on SNES back in 1995. Starring Yoshi, the game broke convention by not allowing players to control Mario directly; riding on Yoshi's back, Mario would float away if hit by an enemy and be captured if not reunited with a certain time limit. It also looked just so damned good too...



NINTENDO GAMER

Which is your favourite Super Mario Bros. game? The 8-bit NES original? The sheer excellence of *SMB 3*? The SNES-induced fanciness of *Super Mario World*? Ah, I know! It's the 3D freedom and openness of *Super Mario 64*, right? C'mon – everybody loved that one.

SWALLOW AND SPIT

And mine? Well that's easy. I love 'em all [yep, even the odd *Super Mario Bros. 2*]. But if I had to pick just one, then it'd be *Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island* on SNES. An unusual sequel to the classic *Super Mario World*, Yoshi's Island took the spotlight off Mario (even if it was just a tad) and placed it on his little green dinosaur-like sidekick instead. But that's not all that changed – an innovative new game mechanic came along with it. Set when Mario was just a would-be plumber and Princess Rescuer in diapers, you as Yoshi were tasked with protecting Mario along the way to finding his kidnapped baby brother Luigi and getting them both home.

There's more. See, Mario rode on your back. Get hit by an enemy and rather than shrink in size or lose a life [there were no traditional 'Mario' power-ups in *Yoshi's*

Island], you'd lose your precious cargo – Mario himself! With a countdown ticking its way down to zero, you had only a relatively short time to reunite yourself with Mario before it was game over. It's a subtle change but it really made the whole Mario platforming formula feel entirely fresh.

Combine the baby protection mechanic with the game's strong level design and some beautifully cute visuals, and it's not surprising people have such strong and fond memories of *Yoshi's Island*.

TWO SCREENS, ONE LOVE

And *Yoshi's Island DS*? The reason this review sounds so much like a gushing retrospective of the original *Yoshi's Island* is because *YIDS* is almost identical in every way to the SNES classic. The signature crayon-like visual design? Check. Awesomely cool characters just dripping with charm? Check. Challenging level design? Check. Oodles of secrets to find to encourage and actually reward repeat play? Check. Oh yeah, it's all here.

Developer Artoon has also injected some new elements into *YIDS*. Obviously, the action appears on two screens now, however from a gameplay perspective this does

nothing but give you a greater view of what's around you.

The more interesting addition is the new roster of babies to ride with Yoshi. Baby versions of Princess Peach, Donkey Kong and Wario appear alongside the original Mario in-game, giving your Yoshi new abilities. Peach, for example, has longer jump drifts while DK has a dash attack and can swing and climb up vines.

And it works. The new characters add a new level of play to the game while never detracting from or destroying what made the original so good. Strong level design with absolutions gorgeous visuals and character? *Yoshi's Island DS* has this in spades. And it's a real joy to play to boot.

VERDICT

UP: A fantastic plaformer • Great character and visuals • Brilliant multiplayer

DOWN: Where are the psychedelic 'touch fuzzy, get dizzy' effects? • Nabbing all the secrets can be really hard • No multiplayer

SCORE:

90

BUY



POKÉMON RANGER

What? A second new Pokémon game which strays from the formula? Eleanor Eiffe finds out whether this Poké-experiment is worth checking out or not.

INFO

DS

GENRE: RPG

DEVELOPER: Game Freaks/
Nintendo

RATING: G

PRICE: \$69.95

PLAYERS: 1

IN BRIEF:

While the millions-strong legion of Pokémon fans eagerly await the release of *Pokémon Diamond & Pearl* (the first proper new Pokémon games since 2002's *Pokémon Ruby & Sapphire*, due in the next couple of months or so now), Nintendo has released an all-new Pokémon adventure which throws the rulebook out the window. You play as a Ranger, and you "battle" Pokémon by using the stylus to encircle them into submission.

'ROUND AND 'ROUND IN CIRCLES

While the old Pokémon games were somewhat "square" in nature, *Pokémon Ranger* is all about circles. Lots and lots of circles. You see, there's nary a trainer or pokéball to be found in this game. The ranger's weapon of choice is the "Capture Styler" – a kind of pokémon-wrangling magic wand. During a capture (this game's equivalent of a pokémon battle), the ranger's goal is to draw loops around the target pokémon. Pokémon have little blue numbers

over their heads, telling you how many loops you need to draw. When you're done looping, lift your stylus to make the capture. Savage poke-souls will be soothed by the Styler's magical pokémon calming abilities (this game's pretty corny like that) and you'll pick up a handful of experience points. Yay for everyone!

How interesting can it be to draw loop after loop around one pokémon after another? Honestly, not very. Fortunately, there's more to it than that. Pokémon rarely stay still and wait to be captured. Many of them will attack the capture line, forcing you to start all over again. You'll need to make with some serious scribbling if you want to get very far in this game. Some captures can be as exciting as a good traditional battle – but all the looping can be a strain on the wrist and the attention span.

POKÉ-COLOGY

"Friend pokémon" – new recruits that you capture on your journey – are available to give you a "Poké Assist" during a capture. Some of them can also help you negotiate various obstacles in the field. Pokémon will leave after they've



helped you out and can't be taken out of their natural habitat, so the makeup of your party is always changing. Often, you'll need to hunt around to find the right pokémon for the job. Thank goodness there are no random battles in this game! Pokémon wander around in the open; you can pick and choose which ones you'll try to recruit.

After countless near-identical iterations of the Pokémon formula, *PR* is like a breath of fresh air. It's not perfect, by any means, but it's great to see the Pokémon people try something genuinely different.

VERDICT

UP: Looks pretty • Smooth, slick controls • A new take on a tired old franchise

DOWN: Bland, corny storyline • May cause dizziness • Can get repetitive in multiplayer

SCORE:

80

BUY

CHILDREN OF MANA

Anthony Corbett pines for better days...

INFO

DS

GENRE: Dungeon crawl

DEVELOPER: Square-Enix

RATING: PG

PRICE: \$69.95

PLAYERS: 1-4

IN BRIEF:

Another in Square's long-running *Mana/Seiken Densetsu* series, this overhead-viewed action title consists of equal parts hacking and slashing. For a trip back to the series' heyday, look out for *Secret of Mana* on Virtual Console.

Whereas previous incarnations of the *Mana* series were action games with a comfortable mix of RPG elements, *Children* puts the focus almost exclusively on combat. This is initially entertaining as the four weapons you gather each have unique properties, and collecting the various gems scattered about affords you a stupid amount of customisation. You can only equip a few jewels at a time, but offsetting your character's deficiencies allows you to maximise your performance in battle, and everything from increasing stats to making individual weapons or elementally-themed familiars more powerful is covered.

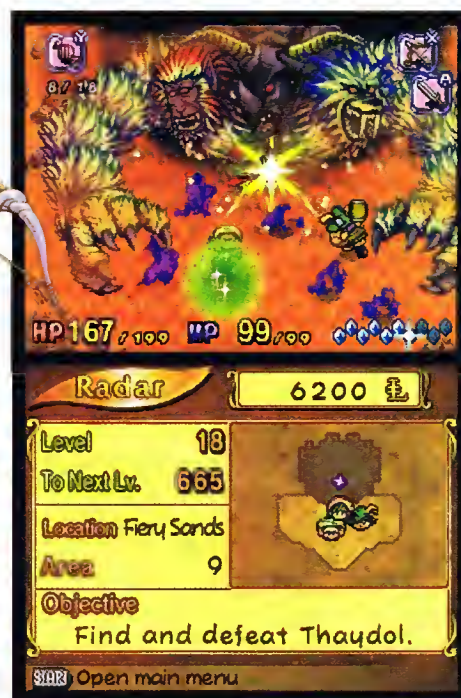
Unfortunately this counts for very little as combat quickly grows dull. No matter how often you switch weapons to take advantage of an enemy's weakness, battle consists almost entirely of jamming on the A or X button until everything stops moving. Similarly, there's little diversity amongst the magical sprites that traipse after you as they each attack in much the same manner. Moreover, even after acquiring the most potent



gems attacks and spells aren't significantly changed – you just have to hit things fewer times before they fall over.

This problem is exacerbated by the mission structure itself, which sees you set out from a hub village to one of the handful of locations on offer each time you select a quest. The mission types vary from continuing the main story to experience point harvesting, yet virtually all of them require you to complete the same objective: erase everything that moves in a series of randomly generated, interconnected screens.

The series' trademark lush aesthetics improve the experience, but not even a multi-player mode (LAN, not Wi-Fi) can make this outing enjoyable for more than a few fleeting moments.



VERDICT

UP: Gorgeous visuals • Some beautiful orchestral movements • Customization

DOWN: Shallow • Repetitive • It's Diablo Lite

SCORE:

77

TRY

COOKING MAMA

March Stepnik is the Cooking Papa.

INFO

DS

GENRE: Cooking!

DEVELOPER: Taito

RATING: G

PRICE: \$69.95

PLAYERS: 1

IN BRIEF:

Cooking Mama offers a collection of staple Japanese and Western style foods to prepare and cook. All this is done via the stylus, which takes the role of cutting knife, wooden spoon, chopsticks and more.

Ahh, now here's something different. Games on the DS fall into two main distinct camps: traditional style games (which could work on any game console) that are adapted to the DS, and those which are designed from the ground-up to take advantage of the DS' touch and dual screens. *Advance Wars* and *New Super Mario Bros.* are examples of the former; *Nintendogs* and *Brain Training* great examples of the latter. You can now add *Cooking Mama* to the second list.

Cooking Mama is a cooking arcade game. I specify arcade here because it's probably not quite the sort of game you may be thinking it is. See, it's not detailed enough to be a straight-out recipe guide nor is it a very accurate representation of the act of cooking itself.

Instead, *Cooking Mama* is a collection of mini games which ask you to pull off a bunch of basic gestures to successfully create a dish. So you'll be stroking the touch screen to simulate the cutting of carrots and meats, drawing circles to represent the stirring of pots

– even blowing into the microphone to help cool certain foods down. And that's just part of the overall repertoire. It's cute, it's fun, and you don't need to be a genius to work out what you have to do.

And this simplicity is *Cooking Mama*'s greatest flaw. With simple mini-games used to complete each recipe it doesn't take long to work through the 76 on offer. You can experiment with your own recipes, but really, that doesn't do much lengthen out what is already a very short and limited game.



VERDICT

UP: Cute visuals • Easy to pick up and play • Fun mini games...

DOWN: ...which are a little too simple • Should be budget priced • Little long term value

SCORE:

70

TRY

GOKU



JUMP! ULTIMATE STARS

A *Super Smash Bros.* style beat 'em up featuring Japan's most iconic manga stars? **Jonathan Ikeda** is sold.

INFO

DS

GENRE: Beat 'em up

DEVELOPER: Ganbarion

RATING: NA

PRICE: 4800

PLAYERS: 1-4

Jump! *Super Stars*, was released mid 2005. For all of its innate charm and addictive play, it has yet to be translated and released to an English-speaking audience. That hasn't stopped the Japanese however - knowing they were on to a particularly good thing they've already gone and released a follow-up. And while the first one was most definitely super - the sequel is, as its name suggests, ultimate.

ALL-STAR CAST

The *Jump!...Stars* series' main draw card is that the combatants in this frantic brawler - the hundred plus combatants - are some of Japanese manga's most popular characters. The sequel, *Ultimate Stars*, increases the depth of *Super Stars* even further, pushing it into true encyclopedia territory. There are characters here from 41 manga series (up from 27 in the first), all of which have featured in Japan's popular weekly *Shonen Jump* magazine (which has an impressive circulation of almost a million copies.) Included among these are all sorts of famous manga properties: *Dragon Ball*, *Kinnikuman*, *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*, *Slam Dunk*, *One Piece*, *Naruto*, *Captain Tsubasa*, and - *Prince of Tennis*! The list goes on

and on - in all, there's a staggering 300 playable characters to choose from. Remarkably, every character in *Ultimate Stars* is endowed with an individual fighting style and unique powers true to the source manga. No doubting that the numbers are impressive, then, but we're happy to say it also plays like a dream.

As with *Jump! Super Stars*, *Ultimate* is an unusual mixture of 2D beat 'em up and platformer style games, and its stage design is similar to the multi-leveled arenas of *Smash Bros.* At the outset only a small number of the game's 300 fighters are playable, however as you progress more characters are unlocked. And more characters equates to more comic strip frames (which is another feature retained from the first game). You see, the touchscreen acts as a fully editable page of manga. When a frame featuring one or more characters is tapped with the stylus, those characters are brought into play, replacing the character you were controlling up to that point. It's a system that works particularly well. Also, before each battle you can edit your page with any comic book frames you've collected so as to best prepare you for fights ahead of you.

Beyond the main adventure, which is progressed by victories

in battle, *Ultimate*'s high standard of chaotic gameplay is maintained in multiplayer fights (which can be played with just one copy of the game). In fact, multiplayer is where we've ended up spending most of our time with *Jump! Ultimate Stars*. Particularly thanks to the outlandish attacks of characters such as *One-Piece*'s Monkey D. Luffy, and the tactical element which comes from being able to swap characters at any point mid-fight, multiplayer *Jump! Ultimate Stars* is the best option for any DS owners waiting for a portable *Smash Bros.* style brawler. With a lack of good beat 'em ups on the DS, we really think it's time Nintendo got to work on making an international release of *Ultimate Stars* a reality. Sadly, for now, *Jump* is staying solely in Japan.

VERDICT

UP: More playable characters than you'll ever use • Superb multiplayer • Tightly balanced gameplay.

DOWN: You might suffer from indigestion there's so much content on offer.

SCORE:

90

BUY



The *Jump! Ultimate Stars* is a Japanese manga/anime fan's dream come true. Taking over 300 stars from more than 40 of Japan's most beloved manga and anime series, this game lets players battle them out against each other in a fast and frantic beat 'em up. While there's an ample singleplayer aspect to *Ultimate Stars*, this is the sort of game that shines particularly bright in multiplayer.

Virtual Console Roundup

The games of yesterday live on!

Launch Special: Virtual Console Game Directory

Altered Beast

Original Release: '89
Original System: SEGA Mega Drive
Players: 1-2
Price: 800 pts

Baseball

Original Release: '86
Original System: NES
Players: 1-2
Price: 500 pts

Columns

Original Release: '91
Original System: SEGA Mega Drive
Players: 1-2
Price: 800 pts



A cross between *Tetris* and *Connect 4*, *Columns* was the Mega Drive's answer to the highly addictive simple puzzle game.

Donkey Kong

Original Release: '86
Original System: NES
Players: 1-2
Price: 500 pts

Donkey Kong Country

Original Release: '94
Original System: SNES
Players: 1-2
Price: 800 pts



Nintendo showed a lot of faith in Rare to do some special things with Nintendo's first game mascot. And they delivered: *DKC* is platform gold and a perfect compliment to the original game.

Donkey Kong Jr

Original Release: '87
Original System: NES
Players: 1-2
Price: 500 pts

Dr Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine

Original Release: '93
Original System: SEGA Mega Drive
Players: 1-2
Price: 800 pts

Ecco the Dolphin

Original Release: '92
Original System: SEGA Mega Drive
Players: 1
Price: 800 pts

F Zero

Original Release: '92
Original System: SNES
Players: 1
Price: 800 pts

Golden Axe

Original Release: '89
Original System: SEGA Mega Drive
Players: 1-2
Price: 800 pts



An arcade hit, *Golden Axe* came to the Mega Drive lacking the graphical bells and whistles. It made up for this with extra levels of side-scrolling hack and slash action. Just don't mind that due to an error, the axe in this one is actually silver.

Gunstar Heroes

Original Release: '93
Original System: SEGA Mega Drive
Players: 1-2



Price: 800 pts

Inspired by the *Super Probotector* series they once worked on, the developers at Treasure created a gem of a debut title in *Gunstar Heroes*. It features the same shooting action, but with a more cracking pace and challenging bosses. This one's essential.

Ice Hockey

Original Release: '88
Original System: NES
Players: 1-2
Price: 500 pts

Mario Bros

Original Release: '86
Original System: NES
Players: 1-2
Price: 500 pts

Pinball

Original Release: '86
Original System: NES
Players: 1-2
Price: 500 pts

Ristar

Original Release: '95
Original System: SEGA Mega Drive
Players: 1
Price: 800 pts

Sim City

Original Release: '91
Original System: SNES
Players: 1
Price: 800 pts

Soccer

Original Release: '87
Original System: NES
Players: 1
Price: 500 pts

Solomon's Key

Original Release: '90
Original System: NES
Players: 1
Price: 500 pts

Sonic the Hedgehog

Original Release: '91
Original System: SEGA Mega Drive
Players: 1
Price: 800 pts



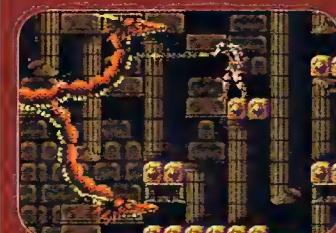
Hey, it's SEGA's blue mascot on Mario's home turf. Better than that, it's actually an enjoyable platformer which is rightfully celebrated for achieving something different for its time. No one runs as fast as this 'hog.

Space Harrier II

Original Release: '89
Original System: SEGA Mega Drive
Players: 1
Price: 800 pts

Super Castlevania IV

Original Release: '92
Original System: SNES
Players: 1
Price: 800 pts



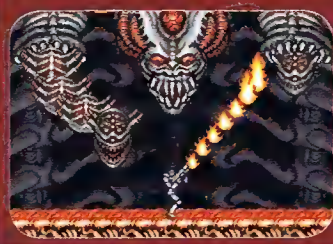
The *Castlevania* series goes from strength to strength (well, except for maybe the N64 games — they were horrible), and *Super Castlevania IV* — a remake of the original NES *Castlevania* game — is no exception. No other series does gothic vampire hunting action as well as the *Castlevania* series does.

Super Probotector

Original Release: '92
Original System: SNES
Players: 1-2
Price: 800 pts
Otherwise known as *Contra III: The Alien Wars*, *Super Probotector* is one of the most unforgiving

Virtual Console Starter's Guide

side-scrolling shooters to ever grace a console. It's never unfair though; for a real challenge, try to finish this game without using any cheats.



ahead of its time — if players ventured too far apart from each other on screen, the action would separate into two halves allowing players to explore without the usual boundaries.

Urban Champion

Original Release: '86
Original System: NES
Players: 1-2
Price: 500 pts

Wario's Woods

Original Release: '94
Original System: NES
Players: 1-2
Price: 500 pts

Tennis

Original Release: '86
Original System: NES
Players: 1-2
Price: 500 pts

The Legend of Zelda

Original Release: '87
Original System: NES
Players: 1
Price: 500 pts



Oh, sure, lavish all your praise on *Twilight Princess* — it's the pretty one in the family. The original *Zelda* — certainly ugly by today's standards — is still worthy of attention though; play this one to see where it all started, and see how far it's come.

Toe Jam Earl

Original Release: '93
Original System: SEGA Mega Drive
Players: 1-2
Price: 800 pts



This side scrolling action adventure game is entertaining in its own right; the co-op mode is what makes this one particularly worthwhile today. It was way

Game of the Month

Super Mario 64

Original Release: '97
Original System: N64
Players: 1
Price: 1000 pts



It's hard to put in any other way: after years of experiencing Mario from the side only, running around a brightly-coloured world of *Super Mario 64* for the first time was nothing short of a revelation. And that sense of awe followed throughout the game. Vast worlds filled with clever puzzles greeted players, offering a near-perfect 3D translation of the 2D Mario legacy.

And it's just as satisfying to play now, although we recommend ditching the Classic Controller for a GameCube controller if you can; the indigo pad better emulates the original N64 controller than the flat and awkward multipurpose one does.

Returning fans get the benefit of a slight increase in image clarity if playing through component cables. And newcomers — man, you're in for a treat.



What you need

Everything you need to play Virtual Console games

- An online enabled Wii.
For more information on connecting Wii to the internet, turn to page 14.
- Available space on the Wii.
- Wii points to purchase games.
Wii points are available from retailers or can be bought using a credit card at the Wii Shop channel on the Wii.
- For anything more recent than NES games (which can be played using the Wii Remote), a Classic Controller or GameCube controller is required to play the games. Classic Controllers are available for \$29.95. NG recommends GameCube controllers for more comfortable play with N64 games.

Wii Points Conversion Table

1000 pts	\$15.00
2000 pts	\$30.00 *Retail only
3000 pts	\$45.00
5000 pts	\$75.00

NES	500 pts	\$7.50 (approx.)
SNES	800 pts	\$12.00 (approx.)
MD	800 pts	\$12.00 (approx.)
N64	1000 pts	\$15.00 (approx.)

Region locking

At this stage, Nintendo only has plans to re-release PAL titles onto Virtual Console, meaning all those great games which were never released in Australia (like *Chrono Trigger* and *Super Mario RPG*) won't be finding a home on the Wii just yet. It hasn't been ruled out altogether though, so if you want access to all the classics that we never got the first time 'round it's time to get vocal.



Like clockwork...

Mark your calendars: the Virtual Console list gets updated with new games every week on Friday at 10:00pm EST (12:00pm NZ). Expect a handful of titles with each update.

VC Housekeeping

Virtual console games come in at a maximum of around 165 blocks, with the Wii's 512MB of internal memory offering 2200 blocks to start with. So don't worry about filling up the Wii's too soon — you'll need to spend a few hundred dollars on VC games to do so.

If you do run out of room, however, there are two options. The first is buying an SD memory card and simply copying the games across to it. The second — delete the VC titles. Nintendo sells you the license to play the games, not the games themselves. What this means is the Wii keeps a record of what you've already bought and allows you to download it to the same Wii as many times as necessary. And with the small file sizes of Virtual Console titles, downloads never take long anyway.

VC: Playing the Old School

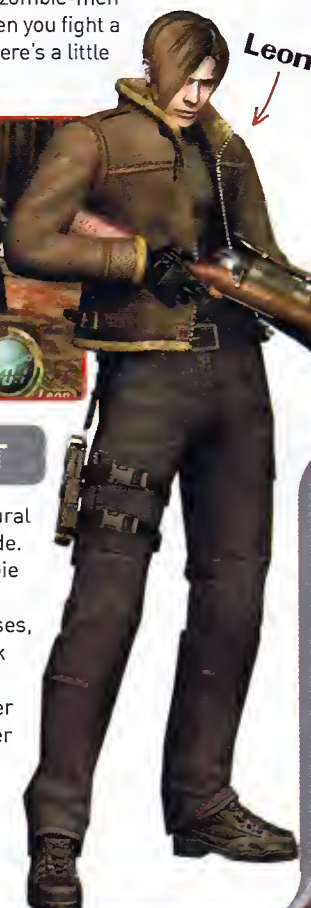
Got a bunch of NES or SNES controllers gathering dust and cobwebs under the house? Hungry for that authentic retro experience which the Classic or GameCube controller just can't possibly re-create? The solution is simple: put the original controllers to use.

US-based Retrozone (www.retrousb.com/wii.html) has created adapters for NES and SNES controllers which plug into the GameCube controller ports at the top of the Wii. Only trick is that they're only available over the internet, and you'll be paying US\$19.00 for the privilege — which isn't exactly cheap (and don't forget that original controllers aren't included in the price). Here's hoping locally available adapters appear soon. And we would love to see a Nintendo 64 controller adapter as well, while they're at it.

Resident Evil 4

WHAT IS IT?

Resident Evil 4 places you in the boots of Leon Kennedy, a special agent tasked with rescuing the President's daughter from a crazy cult of Spanish zombie-men. Gameplay boils down to walking around a variety of beautiful environments while shooting said zombie-men and also solving the occasional puzzle. And then you fight a boss and win the game. The end. (Obviously there's a little bit more to it than that but you get the idea.)



DEFINING MOMENT

You're in a two-storey house in a primitive rural village somewhere in the Spanish countryside. To escape from a horde of bloodthirsty zombie villagers, you've barricaded the doors and windows with anything you can find: bookcases, chests of drawers – anything. With your back to the wall and a shotgun in your hands, you wait upstairs and listen to the villagers bicker with each other as they try to get inside. After a brief period of ominous silence, you hear a sound that makes your blood run cold. VRRRRMMM. VRRRRM. It's the sound of a chainsaw starting up...

Details

PLATFORM: GAMECUBE

GENRE: SURVIVAL HORROR

RELEASED: 24/07/2005

RRP: \$99.95

RARITY: Reasonably common

WHY BUY IT?

Resident Evil 4 is easily the best game in the entire *RE* series – mainly because it doesn't replicate the mistakes of its predecessors. See, the problem with the other *RE* games is that they tend to hide the fun bits (where you shoot zombies in the face) behind a whole mess of unfun bits (where you DON'T shoot zombies in the face).

Fortunately, *RE4* doesn't make the same mistake. It's pure zombie-blasting fun from beginning to end. That probably sounds like empty hyperbole, but that doesn't mean it isn't true. Because it is.



BACK PACK



Neato boxart from ages ago

Released in December 1987 for the NES, *Mega Man* is rightly regarded as one of the greatest platform games ever released. But the box? Not so great. Seriously, is this the sort of hero you'd want to play as? A fat brain-damaged man-child dressed in pyjamas and a stackhat? Tsk. Shameful.



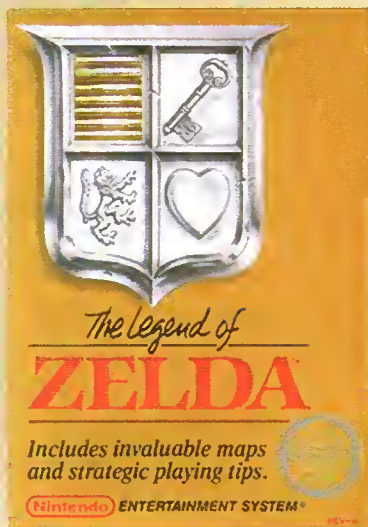
Thank God it's Friday - IN HELL

While we're on the subject of survival horror games, let's talk a little bit about what could be considered the first example of the genre ever made: *Friday the 13th* for the NES. Very, very, VERY loosely based on the slasher movies of the same name, *F13* put you in the tiny white shorts of a summer camp counselor whose job it is to a) throw rocks at angry bats,

and b) not get murdered by the crazy undead dude in the hockey-mask. Fun! Anyway, even though it plays terribly now, *F13* was pretty innovative stuff back in 1987. As the official jingle says, it emulated all the fun of being hacked to death with a machete – but with none of the dying. (At least I think that's how it went. My memory of it is sort of hazy at this point.)



THIS MONTH IN NINTENDO HISTORY



February 21, 1986:

The Legend of Zelda is released in Japan for the Famicom Disk System. Subsequently given an international release on the NES in 1987, the game is received with considerable enthusiasm all over the globe and spawns what will later become one of the most respected and successful gaming franchises of all time.

February 12, 1990:

Mario Bros. 3 is released in the US for the NES. It goes on to sell 17.28 million copies, thus becoming the best selling console game of all time.

February 8, 1999:

The first ever *Mario Party* is released for the N64. In March 2000, Nintendo agrees to issue 80,000 padded-gloves in response to claims that activities in the game involving excessive analogue-stick rotation cause blisters and other assorted hand injuries. Subsequent *Mario Parties* do not feature mini-games involving stick rotation.

February 14, 2003:

Nintendo releases the GBA SP: an upgraded version of the enormously successful Game Boy Advance.

Among the SP's new features are a stylish clam-shell design, more responsive buttons, and – thank God – a proper backlight for the LCD display. As of September 2006, the GBA SP has sold over 40 million units worldwide.



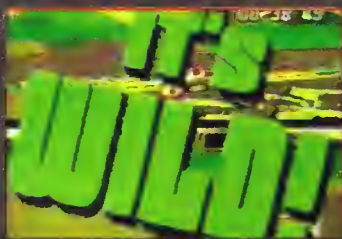
SUPER MARIO KART SHAME

Horrible ad debases franchise, causes cancer

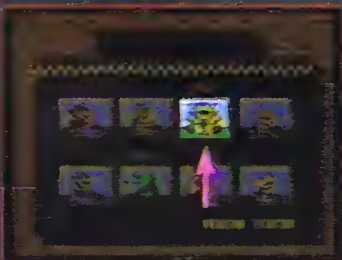
In the 1990s, it was common for videogame companies to "rad up" their ads in an attempt to make their products seem way more cool than they actually were. In these ads, the average gamer was depicted as a good-looking 12-year old whose fondness for STICKING IT TO THE MAN was eclipsed only by his enthusiasm for TOTALLY RAD GAMES. One such WIKKED COOL game was (apparently) *Super Mario Kart* for the SNES. Here's how Nintendo of America presented it in a hilariously bad TV ad from 1992:

"Let's go racing in *Super Mario Kart* fun car MADNESS! Only on SUPER NES!"

"Turn the track into a giant MUD PIT! Burn rubber on ICE! Murder (?) asphalt! IT'S WILD!"



"Mix it up with the BIG BOYS! See Bowser in his big foot-thumping TRUCK!"



"See Yoshi's GO-KART really GO!"



"Mushrooms! Banana peels!! TURTLE SHELLS!!!"



"DYN-O-MITE!"



"Check your rear-view and make 'em eat DURST! Or got into battle mode and RUIN HIS DAY! Two speeds: FAST and WAY TOO FAST!"



It's two-player fun on the SPLIT SCREEN! Only for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System! Now you're playing with power ...



SUPER POWER !!!

GAME AID

CHEATS, TIPS AND GREAT GAMING ADVICE



Ahh, Super Happy Gaming Fun! It's not all rainbows and lollipops though. For every fresh-faced twenty-something clad in white sitting on a designer couch in a dream loft apartment absolutely pwning a game on Wii (ahh, gotta love those lifestyle shots), there's a frantic gamer ready to flush their Wii remote or DS down the toilet in sheer frustration. Dan, our resident lover of difficult games, even bites down on harmless and defenceless pieces of furniture when he gets stuck. Think of the furniture. Dear god, think of the poor furniture.

This section, then, is for any gamer tempted to sink their teeth into their couch in frustration. Aside from tips, cheats and guides to help get you get the most out of the games in question, you'll find that Game Aid also tends to specific requests for help in a game. Isn't that spiffy? Damn straight it is.



CONTACT US

Send any questions (and even special requests) to:

Game Aid
Nintendo Gamer
78 Renwick Street
Redfern NSW 2016

Or email us: game_aid_ngamer@hotmail.com

A FEW POKÉ-PROBLEMS

Dear Nintendo Gamer,
I'm having a few problems with *Pokémon Emerald* on GBA.

1. How do you get Surskit, Roselia, Zangoose and Lunatone?
 2. How many times in a row do I have to beat the Battle Factory for its Symbol?
 3. How can you get more than one Sun Stone?
- Zak Hammat, SA

1. You can't catch any of those four pokémon in the Emerald version. You'll have to trade them over from *Pokémon Ruby* or *Sapphire*. Surskit and Roselia are available in both versions. Zangoose is only found in Ruby, Lunatone only in Sapphire.
2. You'll encounter your first Frontier Brain (and thus earn your first Symbol) after three rounds of competition. Remember that each round consists of seven consecutive battles, so that's twenty one opponents to beat! The second Frontier Brain will show up after six rounds. Don't forget to save whenever you have the chance!
3. You can't, unfortunately. That means that you'll have to choose between evolving Gloom into a Bellossom or Sunkern into Sunflora. And that means you'll have to trade with another version to complete your Pokédex. Good old, predictable Pokémon, eh?

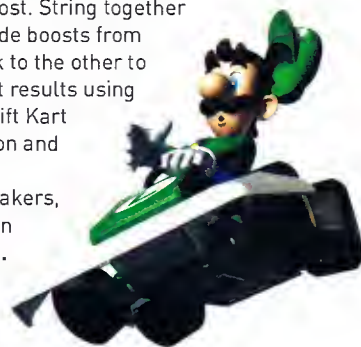
MARIO'S SNAKE 'N' BAKE

Dear Nintendo Gamer,
I've been playing a lot of Wi-Fi matches in *Mario Kart DS* lately. Everyone I play against all seem to be snakers and they're really, really fast! Could you please, please, pretty please with sprinkles on top tell me how you snake?!?

Corin Brewer, QLD

Snaking, or "Straight Stretch Mini Turbo" as some *Mario Kart* nerds like to call it, is the art of building up speed by power sliding and boosting along a straight stretch on track. While you're power sliding (D-pad and R), waggle the D-pad left and right — it takes a bit of practice to settle into a good "waggle speed". If you're doing it properly, you'll see blue sparks, then red sparks coming from your wheels. Let go of the R button when the red sparks appear and you'll get a speed boost. String together successive power slide boosts from one edge of the track to the other to snake. You'll get best results using a lightweight, low-drift Kart with good acceleration and handling.

To thwart other snakers, try to hit them with an item mid-powerslide. It'll throw them right off their



WII SPORTS

PLAY LIKE A PRO

Bowling: To pull off an awesome 91 pin strike in Training Mode, try this little trick. Move as far to the side of the lane as you can (right if you're right handed, left if you're left handed) and aim to get the ball rolling along the rail. Sure, it's a bit like cheating, but the results are spectacular!

Tennis: To control the direction of your hit, time your swing carefully. For example, if you're right handed, hit a little early on the forehand to make the ball travel to the left. Make contact with the ball a little late to make it travel to the right. The opposite is true for backhand. And of course,

everything's the other way around for lefties.

Golf: Hold off on the backswing when you're going for a short putt. Use a forward pushing action to gently nudge the ball into the hole.

Baseball: You'll need to swing the bat a little earlier than you probably think. Big swings will send the ball further but they make it harder to time your hit. Stick to short, fast swings of the bat when you're starting out.

Boxing: To dodge your opponent's blows, you only need to move your wrists, not your whole body. This will make it easier to get back in position to deliver your killer left hook.





GRUNTY GRUMBLES

Dear Nintendo Gamer,
I'm having trouble with *Banjo-Kazooie: Grunty's Revenge* on GBA.

1. In "Spillers Harbour", Spillerston, the last Jiggy and two musical notes are on top of a house. I know I have to jump onto the roof of the gazebo and hit the yellow icon, but how exactly do I get them?
2. Where do I get the tank from? The only place I can think of is the "Freezing Furnace" or "Grunty's Industries".
3. Also in the "Freezing Furnace", there is a jinjo frozen in the ice. How do I unfreeze it?

Joy, VIC

1. Use the Shock Spring pad, near the Bozzeye's hole to get up to the yellow switch in question. Activate it, and you'll see another pad appear — but only for a limited time! Use Talon Trot to get to the new Shock Spring pad, and use the pad to reach another switch (to the west). Hit the second switch and Talon Trot your way back to the Shock Spring pad. Now hit yet another switch and run to reach the Jiggy.
2. You can get the tank in the Freezing Furnace. You need to get the Mumbo Totem and talk to Mumbo's skull.
3. Use Fire Eggs to melt the ice, then Bill Drill the ground to get the jinjo.

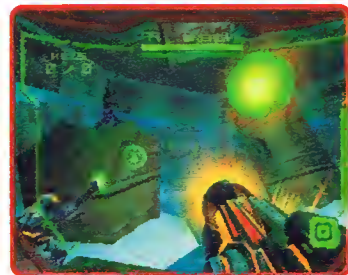
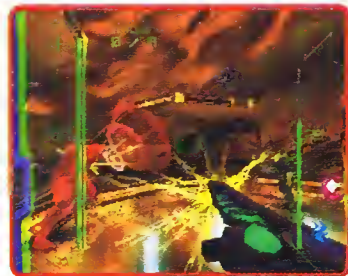
MARIO METROID MUDDLES

Dear Nintendo Gamer,
I'm stuck in a couple of games.

1. How do you finish the last level in *New Super Mario Bros.* on DS?
2. In *Metroid Prime: Hunters*, how do you unlock the force field in Transfer Lock, Celestial Archives?

Jaquille, NZ

1. In the first part of the level, use the "?" switches to flip the room so that you can get past the Thwomps. You'll need to punch some bricks to reveal all of the switches. Now it gets a little bit tricky. Just past the halfway marker, you'll see a series of platforms in front of you. There are any number of ways you could get across them, but you'll need to choose the correct path to be allowed further into the castle. Take the bottom path in the first platform area, the top path in the second one and the middle path in the third. After some ledges, bricks you have to ground pound and a lava pit, you should a low tunnel on the left. Slide Duck to get into the gap and grab the last Star Coin before you make your way through the big red boss doors on the right. Without spoiling anything for you, I'll just tell you that there will be two enemies in the final boss fight. Take care of the smaller one first and watch out for flames!
2. On your second visit to the Celestial Archives, you'll fight what feels like several armies' worth of enemies in the Transfer Lock area. When you've beaten them all, a large pit will open up. The switches for the force field are down there.



Wii, GCN Guide

BOSS OF THE MONTH: STALLORD



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS (WII/GCN)

Stallord, undead boss of the Arbiter's Grounds Temple is probably the first enemy in Twilight Princess that'll really test your abilities. When you begin the battle, take note of the

grooves around the top of the arena. Those grooves will let you pick up plenty of speed with your newly-acquired Spinner ability. When you're at top speed, launch yourself downward to smash into Stallord's weak point — his back. You only need to land three successful hits in this first phase of the battle — but expect Stallord to make it very difficult for you! There are spiked spinners in the grooves at the top of the arena — jump out of the way if they get too close. Also watch out for the hordes of undead criminal types that Stallord summons to protect himself. Hit one of them, and you can end up ricocheting all over the place!

The second part of the battle

begins with a giant platform rising up out of the sand. Your goal now is to attack Stallord's head. Spin around the outside and jump from wall to wall to avoid the fireballs. When you catch up to Stallord's head, jump at it. If you hit it, the head will fall to the ground so you can attack it. Watch out for the spiked spinners, keep avoiding the fireballs and this battle is in the bag!



GAME AID



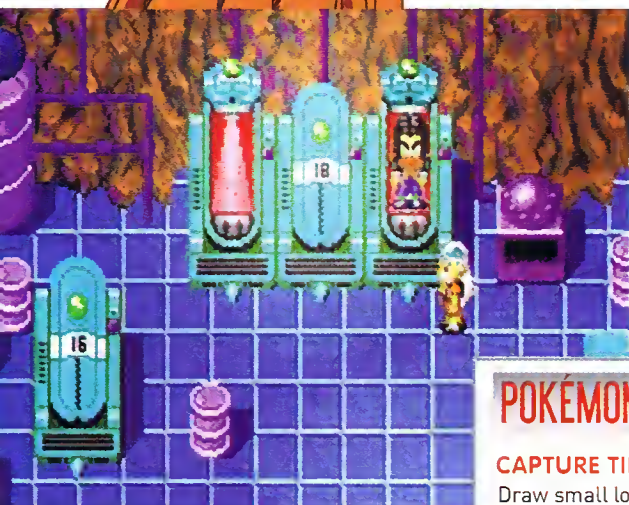
A RIGHT DRAGON BALLS-UP

Dear Nintendo Gamer,
Where are the three generators in *Dragon Ball Z: The Legacy of Goku II* on GBA?
Henry Crimmins

From the room where Bulma tells you destroy the generators, go through the door on the right. See the yellow thing? That's generator number one.

To find the second generator, head down from the area where you fought Dr. Gero and picked up the Golden Capsule. Take the door on the bottom left, then the one on the top right, to get out to a clifftop area. Head upwards to an area with a save point. Switch to Vegeta, talk to the dinosaur, turn Super Saiyan and pick up an egg. Now skim along the bottom of the screen and make your way past the Eggbots and Tiger Bandit. Skim along the walls, avoiding enemies, to make your way down to the second generator.

The third generator is a fair distance away from the other two. You'll hear some music playing as you approach a town. This is your cue to go up the mountain and into a cave. Turn on the switches to open the door to Vinnie's House. Guess what's in there? Yep — the third and final generator.



WIND PAPER PRIME

Dear Nintendo Gamer,
I am playing *Zelda: The Wind Waker* and have encountered a problem. I've just been catapulted off the boat onto the island with all the searchlights circling around. I have put out three of the four lights but I am stuck on the last one (the one that shines out the main area nearest the small yellow window where Link's sister is supposed to be). I've also noticed that there's a ladder in the main area but I can't climb it. Why not?

Also, out of *Paper Mario: the Thousand Year Door* and *Metroid Prime*, which is better in terms of overall value and enjoyment?
Patrick, VIC

There are only three searchlights you can take out, so don't worry about that last one. You should be able to at least run around a pick up rupees in the courtyard without the danger of being spotted. If you can't do that, you've miscounted.

As for your ladder issues, you need to get into that area from the top. If you push a box down

DS Tips

POKÉMON RANGER

CAPTURE TIPS

Draw small loops with the Styler if you need to capture a Pokémon such as a Goldeen or a Diglett, which only show themselves briefly. If you're after a Pokémon that moves around a lot, like

Poliwag or Tailow, draw large loops that extend out in the direction the Pokémon is traveling. Some Pokémon, like Machop and Makuhita, try to break the capture line with short range attacks. This is actually the best time to capture them — they're guaranteed to stand still for a little while! Just make sure that your capture loops are

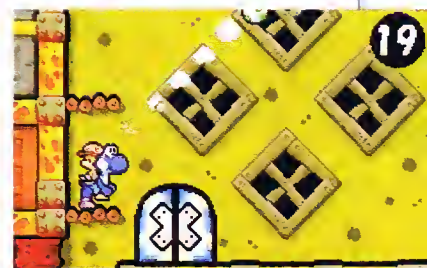
large enough to go around the Pokémon and the clouds of dust its attack kicks up.

YOSHI'S ISLAND DS

TIME TRIAL MODE

When you beat the game, you'll be able to tackle five extra levels in Time Trial mode. Just head to the File Menu as usual and select your completed game file (which should say "Clear!"). "Time Trial" is in the bottom right corner where there used to be a question mark. You can play through the bonus Time Trial levels with an uber-cool black Yoshi. Nice!

DS Tips



from the top ledge, you can manoeuvre it into position underneath the ladder so that you can climb back up. It's not absolutely necessary to do so, but it makes life a little easier if you fall down.

Paper Mario's a lot of fun, sure — but it doesn't compare to the sheer awesomeness of Metroid Prime. Nothing really compares to Metroid Prime — except its equally awesome sequel, of course.

PIKACHU, I CHOOSE... UHH... ME!

Dear Nintendo Gamer,
I just got *Pokémon Mystery Dungeon* on DS and I want to play as a Pikachu. How should I answer the personality questions at the beginning?
Jessie, QLD

It depends on whether you want to play the game as boy or a girl (not that it matters much). If you want to play as a girl, you need to show you have a "Hardy" personality. The questions are random, but try to give the impression that you're sensible, hard-working and would close the lid if you saw a human hand reaching out of a toilet. If you want to play as a boy Pikachu, you'll need to be "Impish". Point out your love of jokes, risk-taking and slacking off when there's work to be done.



HOMER PLAYS GBA

Dear Nintendo Gamer,
In *Fire Emblem* on GBA, I've heard that Hector has his own missions, but I just can't work out where to find them. How can I play these?
Alex, SA

To unlock Hector's storyline, you'll need to make it all the way through Lyn's missions and Eliwood's missions once. Hector's battles start at Chapter 11. Hector has a sidequest unique to his storyline, too. Finish Chapter 18 in less than 15 turns to unlock Chapter 18x. Beat Kishuna in Chapter 18x to unlock Hector's Chapter 18xx sidequest.

SUPER MONKEY BALL: BANANA BLITZ

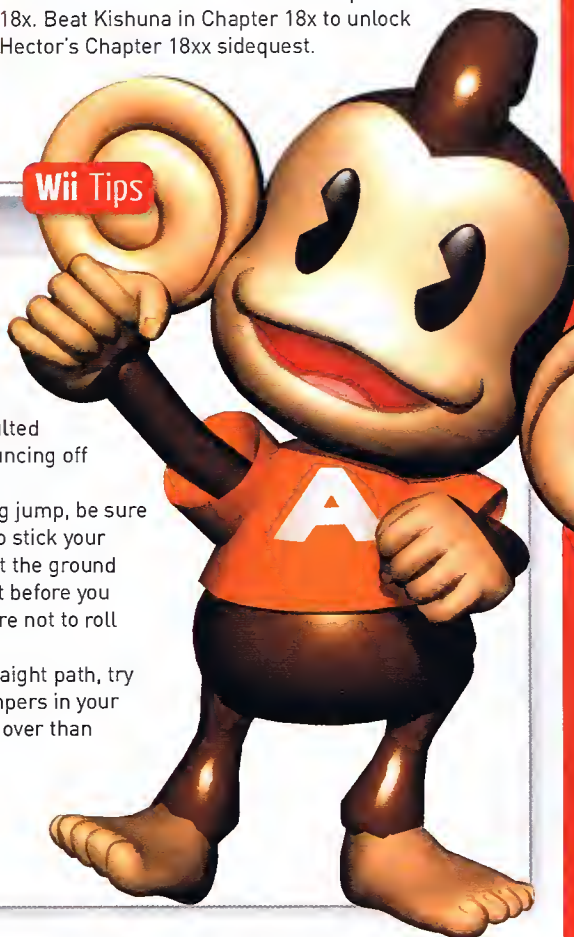


MASTERING THE MONKEY

Rolling the right way: Tips to help you master the monkey.

- In order to defeat the dastardly rocket-launching orangutan boss of the Jumble Jungle, hop on top of the rockets he sends at you. This will turn them right back at him!
- Speed doesn't always win. Be extra slow with the Wii Remote when navigating dangerous turns.

- When navigating down stairs, don't let your bounce carry you too far. Keep the Wii Remote tilted back to avoid bouncing off the edge!
- If you make a long jump, be sure to tilt the world to stick your landing. If you get the ground where you want it before you land, you'll be sure not to roll too far.
- If you've got a straight path, try to jump over bumpers in your way. Better to go over than around!



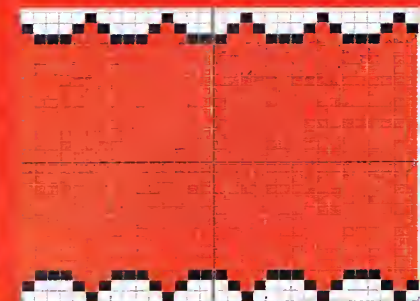
Wii Tips

ANIMAL CROSSING CORNER

Welcome to the first edition of Nintendo Gamer's *Animal Crossing Corner*, where each month, we'll let you know what to look out for in your town, as well as sharing some other neat tidbits — like this month's clothing patterns! Fishing enthusiasts (and anyone keen to make a few Bells) will be pleased to know that some valuable fish are biting at this time of year. Cast your lines into the ocean at any time of day to snag a tuna (7,000 Bells). Try your luck in the river during daylight hours (9am - 4pm) and you might just hook a stringfish (worth a whopping 15,000!). Don't forget the Fishing Tourney on Saturday the 16th!

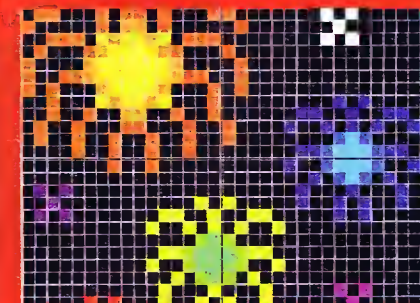
CUSTOM PATTERNS

Still feeling a little festive this Christmas season? We know it's just passed but why not keep the spirit going with this Santa-inspired outfit? Or prepare early for next year. You wouldn't be seen dead in it in real life but, trust us, your character will look adorable!



And don't you wish you had this New Year's Eve outfit to impress the local townsfolk?

Dazzle them all with this fireworks design all year round — you'll be the life of the party!



Note: Both designs were created using colour palette 1/16.

+ GAME AID



META-RIDLEY NUISANCES

Dear Nintendo Gamer,
I just can't beat Meta-Ridley in *Metroid Prime* on GameCube. Is there some sort of secret trick I need to use to defeat him?
Sam, VIC

There's not real "trick", as such, but there are a few strategies that might make this battle easier for you. At the beginning, while Ridley's flying around, stay locked on while he's moving. This will help you a) keep track of him and b) dodge his attacks (by strafing or double-dashing). Whenever Ridley stays still for while, hit him with charged attacks. Use the plasma beam or the wave beam, whichever you prefer.

That was the easy part of the battle.

Once you've taken off about two-thirds of Meta-Ridley's

health, the real fun starts. During his dreaded "grounded phase", Ridley will charge at you and attack with his head and tail. If you're not careful, you can lose a lot of health very quickly! To avoid getting hurt, keep locked on to Ridley and watch for when he rears his head up — that's your cue to double-dash out of the way! Make sure you lock onto him again as soon as you can, and jump to avoid his swinging tail. Ridley's other attack, in this part of the battle, is to spit plasma bursts at you. These shouldn't be too hard to avoid, if you're ready with the jump button.

There are a few different approaches to actually hurting Ridley in this phase of the battle. All of them rely on striking when

he stands still and opens his mouth at you. The first method is to keep charging your beam throughout the battle, then unload a shot into Ridley's mouth. This will stun him and he'll expose his vulnerable chest area. Hit him with a Super Missile for massive damage. If you have plenty of missiles when you begin this battle (say, upwards of 150 on Easy Model) try using the Wave Buster combo to rapidly drain Ridley's health when he's vulnerable. This attack should keep him in an attackable state for longer, too. You will eventually run out of missiles, though. When that happens, use your charged power beam to stun him when the opportunity arises, then switch to plasma when you're firing at his chest. If you're really good at rapid-firing your missiles (repeatedly tapping A and Y in quick succession), assault Ridley with regular missile as soon as he lands. If you do it right, this should stop him from moving at all! Switch to a Super Missile as soon as Ridley exposes his weak spot. Also, you might like to try hitting Ridley with a Morph Ball Boost as soon as he comes down to ground level. This is a risky strategy but, if you pull it off, you'll cause considerable damage and give yourself a good head start on the rest of the fight!



CASTLEVANIA: DAWN OF SORROW

ENDINGS GUIDE

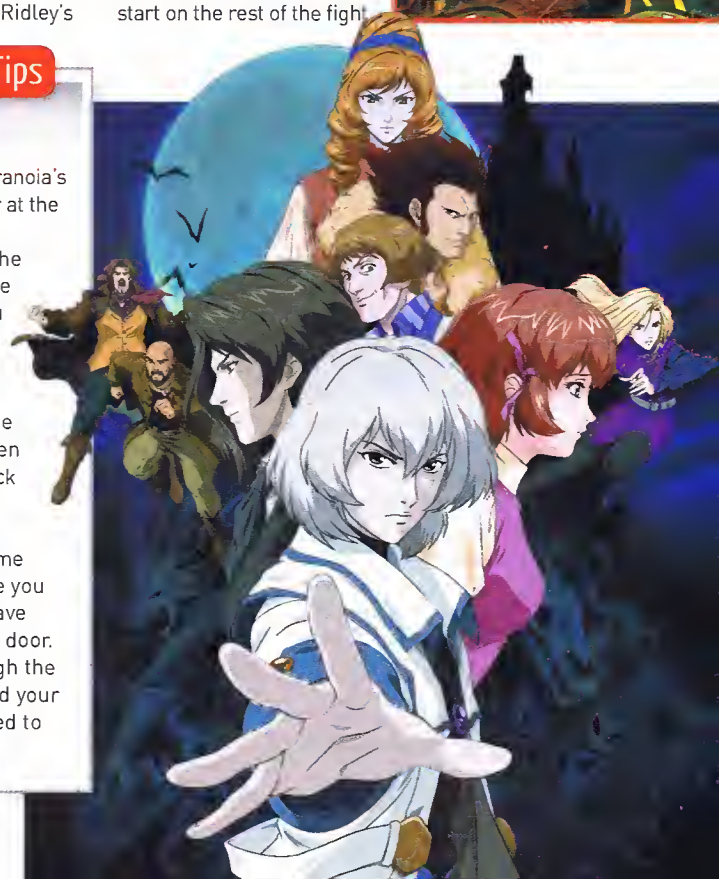
There are three possible endings to *Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow*. To get the "worst" one, simply fight and defeat Dario when you meet him at the Pinnacle. If you want to see either the "bad" or "good" ending, you'll need to defeat the optional boss, Paranoia, who can be found in the Demon Guest House. You'll need the Axe Armour, Killer Clown and Ukoback souls from the Silenced Ruins to be able to face



Paranoia and obtain his soul. With Paranoia's Soul, you'll be able to enter the mirror at the Pinnacle, where you'll face Aguni.

After you've beaten Aguni, go to the Garden of Madness. If you don't have Mina's Talisman equipped when you enter the Garden, you're destined for the "bad" ending (and some interesting cutscenes!). Equip Mina's Talisman before you enter the Garden — and keep it equipped when you enter the castle door — to unlock the "good" ending after a few more boss fights. It is possible to see the "bad" and "good" endings in the same game. Equip Mina's Talisman before you enter the Garden of Madness and save your game before entering the boss door. Unequip the Talisman and go through the door to see the "bad" ending. Reload your save and keep the Talisman equipped to see the "good" one.

DS Tips



PAPER MARIO & THE THOUSAND YEAR DOOR

GCN Tips

BOSS BATTLE: CORTEZ

He may only have 20 hit points, but this ghostly pirate captain sure takes a lot of beating! Cortez is one of those game bosses who like to mix things up a bit — he has a total of three different forms in this battle. The first form shouldn't pose too much of a challenge, since its attacks are fairly easy to dodge. Just try to avoid jumping on the bones! Things get a little more difficult when Cortez shifts to form number two. Use Vivian's "Hide" ability to dodge Cortez's boost attack.

Vivian really is the ideal partner for this



battle. Her "Fiery Jinx" attack comes in very handy when Cortez shapeshifts into his third and final form — his disembodied skull and four floating weapons... of DOOM! Vivian should be able to take out the weapons in one hit, leaving Mario free to attack the head. Keep up this attack pattern (go for the weapons first, then the skull) and you'll whittle away Cortez's HP to nothing. Be warned, though — the pirate captain will heal himself from time to time — by snacking on your audience! Eep!



RESIDENT... EVIL... FOOOOOUUURRRRR!

Dear Nintendo Gamer,

What can I unlock in the "Mercenaries" mode in *Resident Evil 4*?
Penelope, NSW

You can unlock new characters for Mercenaries by getting at least a four star rating each of the four levels. You'll get Ada Wong for beating the Village, Jack Krauser for the Castle, HUNK for the Island and Albert Wesker for clearing the Waterworld. Each character starts with different equipment they all have unique melee attacks. There are a few character-exclusive weapons, as well.

If you manage a five star rating in every level, with every character (that's twenty five-star runs!), you'll unlock the Handcannon for use in the main game. The Handcannon is a super powerful magnum with infinite ammo. Those crazy villagers won't know what hit them.

THE BIG LEBOWSKI

Dear Nintendo Gamer,

What's the point of getting to pro level in *Wii Sports*?
Chartie, QLD

Aside from bragging rights, reaching Pro Level (1000 points) will earn you the privilege of facing off against tougher opponents in single player. Whether or not you consider this "reward" depends on how much you enjoy a challenge. There are a few other benefits to hitting Pro, too. In Bowling, you'll unlock a new ball with some spiffy diamond designs on it. In Tennis and Boxing, you'll be playing in front of a bigger crowd. You'll see all of your Miis in the audience, too!





THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS

PLAYGUIDE PART 1

Heart Piece and Golden Bug Locations

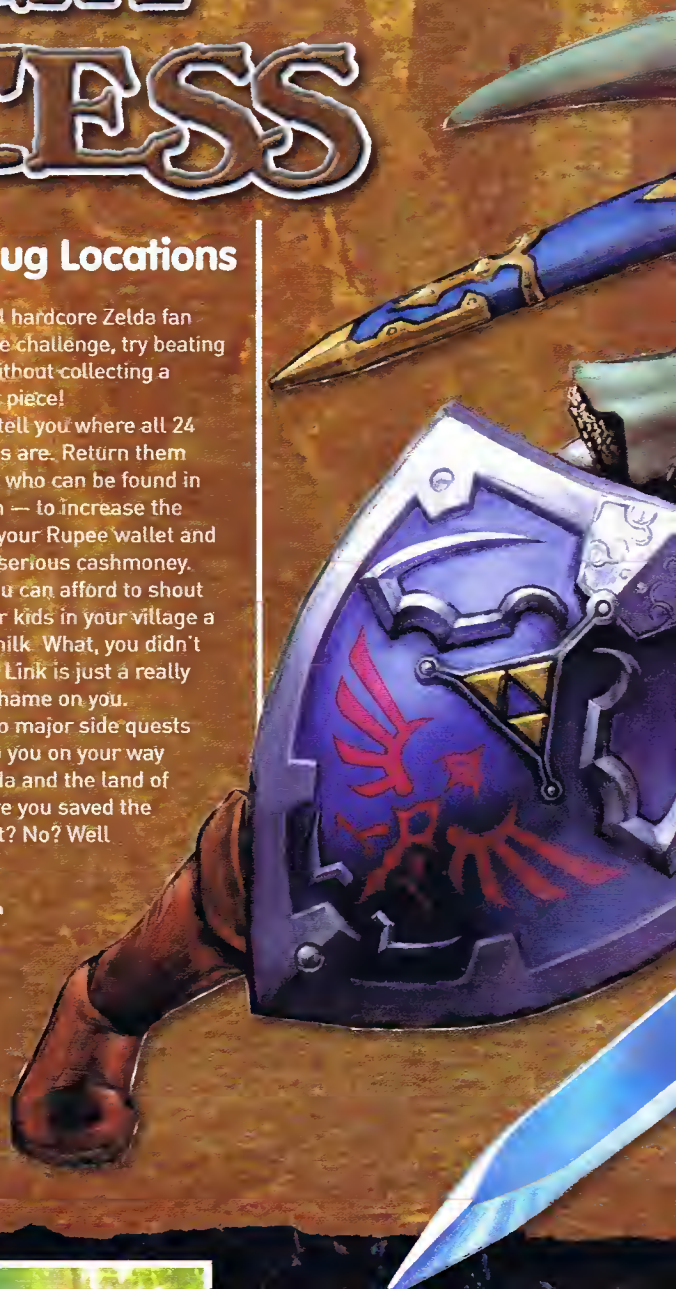
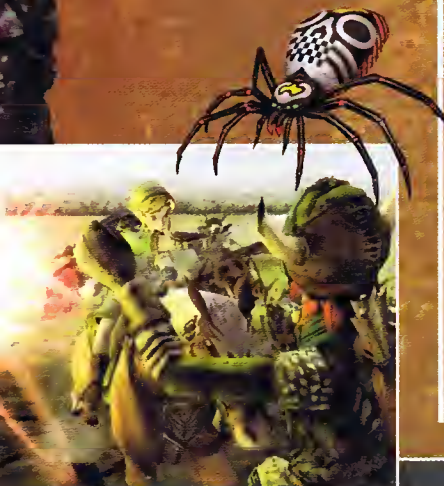
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess has made its way to the Wii (and the GameCube, finally...) and wow — it's impossible to be disappointed, isn't it? Well, except for when you keep getting your rear end handed to you on a silver plate by bosses and some of the trickier enemies in the game. There's a simple fix — find those heart pieces!


In this guide we give you the locations of all the 45 heart pieces to be found in the game, roughly in order as you encounter them. Collect five and you gain a Heart Container, increasing your total health — which is obviously rather handy in most situations, and virtually essential during some of the later boss fights. Oh, and if

you're a real hardcore Zelda fan and want the challenge, try beating the game without collecting a single heart piece!


Also, we tell you where all 24 Golden Bugs are. Return them to Agitha — who can be found in Castle Town — to increase the capacity of your Rupee wallet and earn some serious cashmoney. That way you can afford to shout all the other kids in your village a chocolate milk. What, you didn't realise that Link is just a really nice guy? Shame on you.

These two major side quests should help you on your way to save Zelda and the land of Hyrule. Have you saved the princess yet? No? Well, scram, you!






"Didn't your mum tell you to eat your vegetables? Look at you, you're nothing but skin and bones. Well, just bones."



"So I went fishing the other day. What I caught was *this* big!"



"Woah, that's the second biggest ugly stone head I've seen this week! I will now thrust my sword in your general direction."



HEART PIECE 1

GO TO: Northern Faron Woods
LINK NEEDS: Lantern

There is a dark cave in the north-west section of Faron Woods surrounded by a purple mist. You'll find a silver key inside. Don't forget to light the two torches to reveal a chest containing the heart piece.

HEART PIECE 2

GO TO: Forest Temple
LINK NEEDS: Nothing!

Go to the tall room filled with spider bombs and bomb-eating plants. On the upper level, climb the vines on the wall. Now grab a spider bomb and drop it into the mouth of the plant below that

is blocking a small alcove. It'll take a bit of practice, but you'll eventually get it. Once cleared, you can open the chest and grab the heart piece inside.

HEART PIECE 3

GO TO: Forest Temple
LINK NEEDS: Gale Boomerang

Head to the eastern-most room of the temple where you'll find the monsters under the tiles. There are four torches here. Using the Gale Boomerang's wind gust, put out all the torches in one sequence. The steps that block your way to the chest will now lower — go get your heart piece, kid!

HEART PIECE 4

GO TO: Eldin Province in South-west Hyrule Field
LINK NEEDS: Gale Boomerang

Heading north towards the Kakariko gorge, look east to see

a high rock outcrop formation with a heart piece on top of it. Use the gale boomerang from the cliff's edge to nab it. Now wasn't that easy?

HEART PIECE 5

GO TO: Faron Province in Southern Hyrule Field

LINK NEEDS: Gale Boomerang

In the middle of Hyrule Field, there is a wooden bridge over a small stream. At the southern end of the bridge there is a grove of trees. Look up into the branches of the middle tree. Use the Gale Boomerang to grab this heart piece out of its heart like the self-important hero that you are.

HEART PIECE 6

GO TO: Ordon Village

LINK NEEDS: Epona the horse

After the temple, you will be able to ride Epona again. Ride the horse to the ranch in Ordon Village. Complete Fado's goat herding task and your prize is a heart piece.

HEART PIECE 7

GO TO: Kakariko Village

LINK NEEDS: Hero's Bow

Talk to the Goron outside the Bomb Shop to get on the roof then follow the path up to another Goron. Use the Goron to get to the ladder and climb it to meet Talo. Agree to meet Malo for the target practise game. Shoot the three targets and Malo will give you a heart piece.

HEART PIECE 8

GO TO: Kakariko Village

LINK NEEDS: Iron Boots

GOLDEN BUGS

1. MALE ANT

WHERE?: Graveyard

Hidden cunningly near the tree to the north-west.

2. FEMALE ANT

WHERE?: Kakariko Village

Check inside the house on the west side of town.

3. MALE MANTIS

WHERE?: Lanayru Province in Hyrule Field

Go to the northern side of the bridge over Lake Hylia. Have a look at the pillars for this Golden Bug.

4. FEMALE MANTIS

WHERE?: Lanayru Province in Hyrule Field

Go to the south of the bridge over Lake Hylia. There's an overpass

here, have a look under it. This Golden Bug is high up and out of reach — lure it closer with the Gale Boomerang or Clawshot.

5. MALE BUTTERFLY

WHERE?: Lanayru Province in Hyrule Field

At the eastern entrance to Castle Town, search near the pink flowers to the south and east.

6. FEMALE BUTTERFLY

WHERE?: Lanayru Province in Hyrule Field

Head out east from the eastern entrance to Castle Town, find a high ledge. Use the Clawshot to reach this ledge, where this Golden Bug is hiding.

7. MALE PHASMID

WHERE?: Eldin Province in Hyrule Field

Go to the southern end of the Bridge of Eldin and search on the pillars. This Golden bug may be too far away so use the Clawshot or the Gale Boomerang to bring it closer to you.

8. FEMALE PHASMID

WHERE?: Eldin Province in Hyrule Field

Go to the northern end of the Bridge of Eldin. There's a high cliff to the north. Equip your Clawshot to get up to the ledge. Go west and search the



Go to the light sprite's fountain and destroy the boulder using a bomb. Equip the Iron Boots to sink to the bottom of the pond that you find there. Open the chest for your heart piece. Oh, you haven't got the Iron Boots yet? You need to Sumo wrestle the mayor back in Ordon village for them. This is just awesome.

HEART PIECE 9

GO TO: Kakariko Village

LINK NEEDS: Bomb Arrow/Gale Boomerang

Above the light spring's fountain on a high cliff is a group of rocks. Destroy them using bomb arrows. Now use your Gale Boomerang to gain the now revealed heart piece. Easy, eh?

HEART PIECE 10

GO TO: Eldin Province in Hyrule Field

LINK NEEDS: Bombs/Clawshot

Head North from Kakariko Village and find the lone boulder to the west. Bomb it. Now follow the path up, climb the vines, keeping going to the next boulder. Bomb it and climb the vines before you. Climb up the ledge before you, then drop to the lower ledges to find a chest containing...you guessed! A heart piece!

HEART PIECE 11

GO TO: Goron Mines

LINK NEEDS: Iron Boots

In the room where you must walk on the ceiling, head to the north-west corner. Drop down to the ledge and find a chest with a heart piece inside.

HEART PIECE 12

GO TO: Goron Mines

LINK NEEDS: Iron Boots

Go to the room with the Beamos statues. Using the Iron Boots, walk up the magnetic wall. Take the right path as it branches on the ceiling to find a chest containing a heart piece.

HEART PIECE 13

GO TO: Lakebed Temple

LINK NEEDS: Clawshot

In the central room, go to the second floor. Now equip the Clawshot and use it to get to the middle chandelier. There's a chest with a heart piece inside!

HEART PIECE 14

GO TO: Bridge of Eldin in Hyrule Field

LINK NEEDS: Clawshot, Iron Boots, Bombs and Arrows

Go to the northern end of the Bridge of Eldin. There is a ledge on the cliff face to the north at you can reach by using the Clawshot. Follow the path to a cave (using bombs to clear the way). Now roll and jump off the edge inside the cave. While in midair, change to Iron Boots — you'll be drawn to the magnetic beam. Now head to the bottom to find a chest with a heart piece inside.

HEART PIECE 15

GO TO: Lakebed Temple

LINK NEEDS: Clawshot

You need both water sources flowing for this piece. In the central room on the second floor,

Clawshot the switch to the east to make the water flow to the west. Head down to the first floor and into the western rooms. Go to the room where water has now risen and you can reach a bridge. From there, Clawshot up to a high platform. Step on the switch and use Clawshot again to pass the gate. Voila! A chest...

HEART PIECE 16

GO TO: Spirit Spring in Lake Hylia

LINK NEEDS: Clawshot

Go to the spirit spring and follow the path to the left and behind. Use your Clawshot to get to the upper ledge. Enter the room to the back, light the torches and claim your heart piece. Now, just as an aside: so far, how much are you enjoying *Twilight Princess*? Isn't it just fab?

HEART PIECE 17

GO TO: Southern Cave in Lake Hylia

LINK NEEDS: Plenty of Bombs and

Lantern Oil

Go to the hidden Howling Stone up a cliff in the southern part of the cave. Just south of the stone is a boulder. Bomb it and enter the tricky maze. After many bombs and much oil (!), light the two torches at the end of the maze to reveal a hidden chest containing a heart piece.

HEART PIECE 18

GO TO: Upper Zora's River

LINK NEEDS: rupees to hire a boat.

Head to the Fishing Hole and pay to go fishing. Head out to the rock formation in the centre of the lake. Find the Piece of Heart on top of the rocks. Now cast a line to catch it!

HEART PIECE 19

GO TO: Enemy Camp in

Gerudo Desert

LINK NEEDS: a shower and a good



wall to find the Bug. You will need to use your Gale Boomerang or clawshot to capture it.

9. MALE DAYFLY

WHERE?: Gerudo Desert

Just south of the middle of the Gerudo Desert, the golden Dayfly is flying around. It's just north of some wooden gates that you can crash through with a boar.

10. FEMALE DAYFLY

WHERE?: Gerudo Desert

Head to the south-east part of the desert where you'll find a pillar with chest on top of it and a statue as well. Look to the north in the trenches in the sand to find this golden bug.

11. MALE STAG BEETLE

WHERE?: Lanayru Province in Hyrule Field

Go to the river that flows out of Zora's Domain. It's in the north of

Hyrule Field. Travel east from the river to find a single tree — the golden bug is nearby.

12. FEMALE STAG BEETLE

WHERE?: Lanayru Province in Hyrule Field

Head to the north-west area of Hyrule Field and find the mountain path up to Zora's Domain. On the way up, take the path to the right (left to see Zora). Above the boulder, the Female Stag Beetle is hanging on the wall. You'll need the Clawshot or Gale Boomerang to get it.

13. MALE LADYBUG

WHERE?: Lanayru Province in Hyrule Field

From Castle Town head south into a

field. Go west to find a wall — on it sits the Ladybug. Follow it as it flies away and it will come close enough to catch. You do the rest.

14. FEMALE LADYBUG

WHERE?: Lanayru Province in Hyrule Field

Go to the courtyard in the field south of Castle Town. You will find three trees on the eastern side of the pool. The ladybug is on one of them. Follow it as it flies away and you'll soon catch it.

15. MALE GRASSHOPPER

WHERE?: Eldin Province in Hyrule Field

Head north from Kakariko Village into the large field. You'll find it in the southern part of this area.

lie down...

You're under attack by many enemies so why not attack the roaring boar? Destroy it and a piece of heart is revealed. Why of course. That's one of the more logical places to hide a piece of heart, eh?

HEART PIECE 20

GO TO: Arbiter's Grounds

LINK NEEDS: Clawshot

In the room with the four poe torches, use the clawshot to get to the platform in the north-west corner. Open the chest to reveal the Piece of Heart. Another aside: Princess Zelda is just so hawt, especially in ninja gear.

HEART PIECE 21

GO TO: Arbiter's Grounds

LINK NEEDS: Spinner

In the dungeon's second part, go to the north-west room on the basement level — the one with lots of spinner tracks. Use the tracks to reach the ledge in the north-west with the piece of heart chest.

HEART PIECE 22

GO TO: Kakariko Village

LINK NEEDS: 1000 rupees

Go to the Malo Mart in the village

and donate 1000 rupees to the old Goron to fix the bridge. Now talk to the goron outside the shop. Take up the challenge: carry hot springwater to a Goron at the new bridge without dropping it! This is a pain, mind you. When you reach him, throw the water at him and he'll leave you a heart piece. You've certainly earned this one

HEART PIECE 23

GO TO: Castle Town

LINK NEEDS: 1000 rupees

Go to the East Road in Castle Town and find the man in green robes asking for donations. Give him 1000 rupees to receive a heart piece, and the warm and fuzzies for being so kind.

HEART PIECE 24

GO TO: Kakariko Gorge in Hyrule Field

LINK NEEDS: Bombs and Lantern

In the western part of Kakariko gorge, find the wall that you can bomb. Bomb it! Inside a room in the northwest corner, light the two torches to reveal a chest with... a heart piece in it. Well, it wasn't going to be antique vase now, was it?

HEART PIECE 25

GO TO: Lanayru province in Hyrule Field

LINK NEEDS: Bombs and Spinner

There is an exit to the north-east that is blocked by boulders. Bomb your way through them. Now use the spinner tracks to first ride up, then jump across to reach the heart piece.

HEART PIECE 26

GO TO: Eldin Province in Hyrule Field

LINK NEEDS: bombs, spinner and Wolf Form

Find the small wooden bridge just north of the Bridge of Eldin. A little further north, there are spinner tracks on a wall. Use the spinner to reach a small ledge. Use wolf form to find a good dig spot. Dig there! Inside, defeat the skeletons with bombs to reveal a chest with a piece of heart inside.

HEART PIECE 27

GO TO: Death Mountain

LINK NEEDS: more Pieces of Heart apparently...

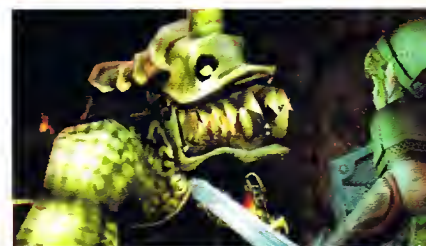
When you've completed Goron mines, take the path to Death Mountain from Kakariko village. Talk to the lone Goron and agree to be boosted up. Face east to get to the ledge. Climb up and head north till you find a hidden room to the right with a piece of heart. Well, it won't be there on its own now. There'll be a chest, actually. The loot you so desire is inside.

HEART PIECE 28

GO TO: Lake Hylia

LINK NEEDS: Wolf Form

Go to the west side of the lake and speak to the little bird Plumm. Score 10,000 points in this mini-



game to receive a heart piece. Don't expect the requisite points from your first go, mind.

HEART PIECE 29

GO TO: Lake Hylia

LINK NEEDS: rupees to play the game

Go to the building east of the bridge over Lake Hylia. Inside, talk to the owner and play the flight and Fowl game. From the platform, look down to see the platforms. Land on the smallest, highest one — open the chest for a mysterious surprise...a heart piece?

HEART PIECE 30

GO TO: Lanayru province in Hyrule Field

LINK NEEDS: Bombs, Ball & Chain

Go to the field north of Castle Town. Take the rocky paths to the north and find a wall facing west that will break when bombed. Inside there are three block moving puzzles, after which you'll reach a heart piece.

HEART PIECE 31

GO TO: Snowpeak Ruins

LINK NEEDS: Ball & Chain

On the second floor with the suspended platforms, use your Ball & Chain to swing them back and forth. Now jump between them to reach the southern ledge



GOLDEN BUGS CONT.



16. FEMALE GRASSHOPPER

WHERE?: Eldin Province in Hyrule Field

In the field just north of Kakariko Village, head to the northeast section to find this Golden Bug.

17. MALE BEETLE

WHERE?: Faron Province in Hyrule Field

Find the stream with the bridge crossing it. Head south-east where two trees sit. The Male Beetle is on the side of one of them.

18. FEMALE BEETLE

WHERE?: Faron Province in Hyrule Field

Go to the tall hedge to the west of the field. Look over it to the trees — this golden bug is on the side of one. Use the Gale Boomerang or the Clawshot to draw it closer.

19. MALE PILL BUG

WHERE?: Eldin Province in Hyrule Field

Travel south of Kakariko Village, past the bridge over Kakariko Gorge. It's on the ground near the path.

20. FEMALE PILL BUG

WHERE?: Eldin Province in Hyrule Field

South of Kakariko Village, check the flowers near the village entrance. This golden bug can be found here.

21. MALE SNAIL

WHERE?: Sacred Grove

As you enter the Sacred Grove, you'll push a block. Drop down into the cave there and you'll see the snail on the wall up high. Use the Gale Boomerang or Clawshot to grab it.



and the heart piece in the chest.

HEART PIECE 32

GO TO: Snowpeak Ruins

LINK NEEDS: Ball & Chain or Bomb

Go to the south-eastern room and head to the second floor. Find the red carpet and odd looking tiles on the ground nearby. Bomb or Ball & Chain the floor to gain access to the room below and the chest with the heart piece.

HEART PIECE 33

GO TO: Snowpeak

LINK NEEDS: to finish the Snowpeak Ruins first!

Go to the top of the mountain by warp. Race Yeto and beat him. Now return and talk to Yeta. Race and beat to win a heart piece. (You'll need to find a shortcut to beat Yeta...*hint*)

HEART PIECE 34

GO TO: Sacred Grove

LINK NEEDS: Bombs and Wolf Form

Go to the east area of Sacred Grove, where you battled the skull kid. Now bomb the large rock in the center of the area you battled him in. Use your Wolf Form to dig a hole. Drop into the cave. Defeat all the enemies to gain a heart piece.

HEART PIECE 35

GO TO: Temple of Time

LINK NEEDS: Dominion Rod

While moving the statue down to the entrance with the Dominion Rod, stop on the fifth floor. Use the statue on a floor switch to deactivate a barrier. Head into the now open area to find a chest with a heart piece inside.

HEART PIECE 36

GO TO: Temple of Time

LINK NEEDS: Dominion Rod

Just before the Temple of Time where the Master Sword pedestal sits, go to the south room near the stairs. Find the owl statue and move it with the Dominion Rod to reveal a room with a heart piece.

HEART PIECE 37

GO TO: Temple of Time

LINK NEEDS: Dominion Rod

Go to the southern room on the fifth floor, again while moving the statue. Use the Dominion Rod to solve the puzzle involving the metal pots hitting switches along enclosed paths. Move the two pots over floor switches will reveal a heart piece in a chest.

HEART PIECE 38

GO TO: Faron Woods

LINK NEEDS: Bombs, Dominion Rod and Wolf Form

Go to Coro's Shop. From there, go north-east and use a bomb to

destroy the rocks. Follow the path to an owl statue. Use the Rod to move it down the path to the small pit. Now as a wolf, use Midna's help to scale the ledges and statue up to a path. There's poisonous fog, but there's also a heart piece here!

HEART PIECE 39

GO TO: Kakariko Gorge in Hyrule Field

LINK NEEDS: Double Clawshots

Find the tall rock in the north-east part of the Gorge. Use the clawshot targets to reach the vines, then climb around the nab the heart piece.

HEART PIECE 40

GO TO: Eldin Province in Hyrule Field

LINK NEEDS: Dominion Rod

Head to the north end of the bridge. Use the Rod to move the owl statue down to the southern end of the bridge and drop it into the hole there. Use it to jump across to the ledge nearby. Climb the ladder and you'll find a chest with a piece of heart inside.

HEART PIECE 41

GO TO: Hidden Village

LINK NEEDS: Wolf Form

Go to the eastern-most house and speak to the head cucco (as a Wolf of course). Agree to play his game. Talk to all 20 cats — be careful to avoid leaving or entering Impaz's house — and return to the cucco. A Piece of Heart will now be waiting for you outside Impaz's.

HEART PIECE 42

GO TO: City in the Sky

LINK NEEDS: Double Clawshot

Enter the east tower, where you

battled the Deku-Baba and the bomb-eating plant. Find the clawshot target above. Clawshot shot to that, then to the vines on the column. Follow the path around, ledges and all, to the chest with the heart piece.

HEART PIECE 43

GO TO: City in the Sky

LINK NEEDS: Double Clawshot

When you reach the second floor of the east wing, you'll need to use your clawshot between a number of flying plants. At the last one, turn to the right and claw shot along the row of plants in front of you to reach a ledge in the south-east. Go through the door to gain the piece of heart.

HEART PIECE 44

GO TO: Twilight Temple

LINK NEEDS: Light Sword or Sol Orb

In the first room to the west on the first floor, use your Light Sword or the Sol Orb to create a platform in the south-west corner. Ride it up to the ledge where the Heart Piece is.

HEART PIECE 45

GO TO: Twilight Temple

LINK NEEDS: Light Sword or Sol Orb and Clawshot

Go to the first room to the east, on the first level. Hold the Sol or the Light Sword as you go through, to clear the small alcove in the north-east. Clawshot up to the ledge and open the chest to gain the heart piece.

22. FEMALE SNAIL

WHERE?: Temple of Time

Go down the stairs near the entrance to the Temple of Time. Head to the left and you'll see the snail on the wall. Use the Gale Boomerang or Clawshot to reach it.

23. MALE DRAGONFLY

WHERE?: Zora's Domain

Go to the west side of the waterfall. Follow the path up and this golden bug can be found flying near the boxes.

24. FEMALE DRAGONFLY

WHERE?: Upper Zora's River

Remember where you rent a boat? The Female Dragonfly is staring you in the face! Use the Gale Boomerang or clawshot to pull it over.

JAPAN IS BUG CRAZY

No, we mean it. Wonder why the focus on catching bugs in Zelda games? Well, it could be the fact that in Japan where *Twilight Princess* was made, bug catching with nets and all is actually a really popular hobby. They've even got shows on television about it, which means it's a bit of a national obsession. And with the creator of the *Zelda* series, Shigeru Miyamoto, being a renowned nature buff, it's not surprising bug catching has been a regular fixture in his games.

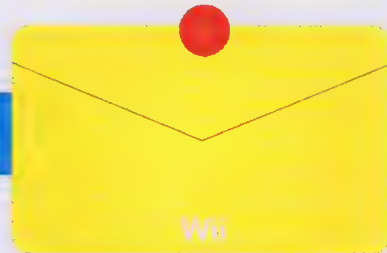


Hey, if they have shows where a chimpanzee takes a dog for a walk to buy cake, why can't they have a show about bugs?

Review

FINAL FANTASY III

We bring you the long awaited remake, *Final Fantasy III* (DS)



Previews

We go hands on with...

SONIC AND THE SECRET RINGS (Wii)



Reviews

WE ALSO REVIEW:

- Wario Ware Smooth Moves (Wii)
- Dragonball Z Budokai Tenkaichi 2 (Wii)
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Feature



HISTORY OF INNOVATION

We examine the history of innovation at Nintendo. The Wii's only the latest in a long line of interesting experiments...



PLUS!

We give you part 2 of our *Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess* playguide!

Wii



BUY MANIA



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